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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-037 *23 February 1996*

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Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' Denies Report on Postponement of Talks

JN2202084496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0800 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ahmad Quray', member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and official Israeli sources categorically denied last night's report by Israeli Channel 2 Television that the final-status negotiations scheduled for May will be postponed until after the Israeli elections, which are scheduled for 29 May. Quray' said the Israeli side made no mention of this. Moreover, a senior Israeli Government official accused the Israeli opposition Likud bloc of spreading unfounded rumors.

Palestinian Affairs: Abu-Rudaynah Denies Start of Talks With Israel

JN2202164696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Official and popular delegations visited the president's office in Gaza to congratulate His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat on the third day of 'Id al-Fitr.

President 'Arafat received a telephone call from U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher today. Christopher congratulated 'Arafat on the advent of 'Id al-Fitr, on his win in the presidential elections, and on the success of the legislative elections. [passage omitted]

In another development, Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, President 'Arafat's adviser, denied reports on the final-status negotiations between the PLO and the Israeli Government. He noted that the meetings that were held did not mark the beginning of the final-status talks. He added that the Palestinians have the right to embark on these negotiations as soon as possible, in accordance with the agreement. He said these negotiations should start no later than the beginning of the sixth year; that is, before 4 May.

Palestinian Affairs: Official Denies Agreement Reached With Israel

JN2202152896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Report by Basim Abu-Sumayiah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Official Palestinian sources denied reports that Palestinian and Israeli negotiators have reached an agreement on a final settlement. The sources admitted that there have been contacts with the Israeli side in this regard, but asserted that the two sides have not reached any agreement or formulated a joint document.

Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the Palestinian Authority Presidency, said that only unofficial ideas were exchanged during unofficial meetings and that no agreement was reached on any of the issues related to the final solution. These reports, he added, are no more than a political trial balloon caused by the dissension in the Labor Party.

Ze'ev Schiff, military analyst for the newspaper HA'ARETZ, published an article today saying that Palestinian and Israeli negotiators reached an agreement during secret meetings three days before the assassination of former prime minister Yitzhaq Rabin. Yosi Beilin, minister of state in the Israeli Prime Ministry, and Mahmud 'Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazin and a member of the PLO Executive Committee, participated in the meetings.

The agreement, Schiff said, covers topics such as amending the borders, placing the Jordan Valley area under Palestinian sovereignty, placing the holy shrines in Jerusalem under Palestinian supervision, placing four large settlements in the West Bank under Israeli control, and opening a passageway between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The agreement also stipulates that Israel will approve the return of a limited number of Palestinian refugees, but the majority of the refugees will stay where they are now. In return, Israel will recognize the establishment of a Palestinian state.

'Abd-al-Rahim affirmed that the Palestinian position on the final status negotiations will not change with respect to settlements, borders, Jerusalem, or refugees. He said this position is currently committed to curbing Israeli violations — confiscating land, opening bypass roads, and expanding settlements.

He said reports of an agreement on a final settlement are untrue and are merely an attempt by the Labor Party to influence Israeli public opinion before the elections to achieve political goals that serve the party's position, as well as to influence the atmosphere of the upcoming tripartite Cairo meeting between Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, Jordan's King Husayn, and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. The aim of this meeting is to support the Palestinian position in the final settlement negotiations.

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Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat To Appoint 'Abbas Council Speaker

TA2202180296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Informed Palestinian sources told our correspondent Kayid Zahir that Palestinian Authority [PA] head Yasir 'Arafat is inclined to appoint Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] as speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council and replace about two-thirds of the current portfolio holders with new members from the legislative council. This comes following intensive consultations held in recent days at 'Arafat's office.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Adviser on Negotiations, Jerusalem

NC2302092796 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 23 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, political adviser to Yasir 'Arafat, in Jerusalem, by Fayiz al-Miliji, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Miliji] Dr. Ahmad, welcome to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Al-Tibi] Thank you.

[Al-Miliji] We recently heard about a crisis between you and the Israeli Government regarding Orient House, the PLO headquarters in East Jerusalem. Could you fill us in on the details of this crisis?

[Al-Tibi] Some Israeli politicians and ministers periodically make statements to tighten the noose around the neck of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem. They try to impose a status quo that will harm the negotiations on the permanent status of Jerusalem. The Palestinian side has always rejected this stance. The most recent statement on this issue came from Israeli Police Affairs Minister Moshe Shahal, who said he issued instructions to forcefully prevent any foreign minister from visiting Orient House. I believe such an unfortunate statement is far removed from diplomatic methods.

[Al-Miliji] Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said he would not allow the Palestinian Authority to carry out activities in occupied East Jerusalem. What is your reaction to this statement?

[Al-Tibi] The Palestinians have been in East Jerusalem since before the occupation. The Palestinians have their national, popular, and social institutions there. There is no doubt that life must continue. Before Oslo, there was Palestinian diplomatic activity in Jerusalem. After Oslo, this activity must continue. The institutions of the Palestinian Authority [PA] are located in the areas that are now under PA control. The issue of sovereignty over Jerusalem will be decided upon in the negotiations on the final status. You know the Palestinian stance regarding Jerusalem is clear. Holy Jerusalem is part of the occupied Palestinian territories. It is the most important part of the occupied Palestinian territories.

[Al-Miliji] Dr. Ahmad, Israeli statements on Jerusalem are intensifying with the rising fever created by the Israeli elections and the beginning of negotiations between the two sides over the final status. Are there any meetings between you and the Israeli side to stop these Israeli statements?

[Al-Tibi] Unofficial and political contacts take place constantly and periodically involving all the parties. Undoubtedly, the Israeli Government is being asked to decrease the intensity of its political statements. Unfortunately, the election campaign in Israel always has negative implications for the Palestinians and the Arabs. Election one-upmanship during campaigning in Israel is always at the expense of the Palestinian side. They always raise the issue of Jerusalem, settlements, etc. We expect to hear many regrettable and rigid statements between now and 29 May.

[Al-Miliji] We heard about a meeting between you and the Israeli side. How true is this?

[Al-Tibi] There was a meeting of the Higher Liaison Committee within a framework of constant and periodic meetings involving brother Abu-'Ala' on the Palestinian side and Uri Savir, the director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry. The recent meeting discussed many subjects left over from previous meetings. In particular, they discussed the settlements the Israelis are building in Jerusalem's suburbs and other parts of the West Bank.

[Al-Miliji] Did you obtain any specific results regarding the settlements?

[Al-Tibi] The Palestinian stance is clear. The Israeli side was asked to adhere to the Oslo agreements and to what former Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin pledged to Yasir 'Arafat in a meeting between them. He pledged that not one settlement or house would be built in the West Bank.

[Al-Miliji] Do you expect the Israeli side to adhere to this?

[Al-Tibi] There is a very clear and firm request in this regard. We heard a statement from Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in which he said he does not accept the Israeli housing minister's program to build 6,000 housing units in the West Bank for the religious zealots.

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But he stated that he approved building 4,000 housing units inside Israel. I believe this is a step in the right direction.

[Al-Miliji] Let us discuss the meetings of the Palestinian Legislative Council and the formation of the PA Council of Ministers. Is there anything new on this?

[Al-Tibi] We will hold the first meeting of the elected Palestinian Council right after the 'Id so that it can start its activities.

[Al-Miliji] When, exactly?

[Al-Tibi] We have not yet fixed the date.

[Al-Miliji] With regard to forming the PA Council of Ministers, have any specific names been presented?

[Al-Tibi] President 'Arafat is the one with the authority—as president of the PA and prime minister of the government—to appoint ministers. He is now immersed in the task of forming the Council of Ministers.

[Al-Miliji] Efforts are being exerted now to convene the PLO Executive Committee. Is there anything new regarding attendance at the meetings of Palestinian figures who did not attend the al-'Arish meeting?

[Al-Tibi] A meeting took place in al-'Arish. Agreement was reached to convene another meeting inside the homeland. I expect that all the members of the PLO Executive Committee will be invited to take part in this meeting. I hope they will participate.

[Al-Miliji] What about the stance of Faruq Qaddumi, alias Abu-al- Lutf?

[Al-Tibi] I know nothing of any change in his decision. I hope we will see him with us as soon as possible.

[Al-Miliji] Let us now discuss the subject of amending the Palestinian National Charter. This has been a persistent Israeli request since the Palestinian elections. Is there anything new on this?

[Al-Tibi] There is a committee chaired by PLO Executive Committee member brother Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] responsible for preparing to convene the Palestine National Council. This committee is continuing its activities and discussions to convene this meeting.

[Al-Miliji] But what is the stance of the Palestinian man on the street regarding amending the Charter?

[Al-Tibi] The members of the Legislative Council are elected and represent the Palestinian people, the man on the street. They are free to vote as they see fit on any decision offered for their approval. I am convinced that they will make their decisions in a democratic way.

[Al-Miliji] What are your views on the expected tripartite meeting among President Mubarak, King Husayn, and President 'Arafat?

[Al-Tibi] As always, with brother President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, we are accustomed to seeing him as a strong supporter of the Palestinian people's rights. This is why he proposed a tripartite summit with His Majesty King Husayn and President Yasir 'Arafat. This support is very important with regard to the final stage negotiations, which will start in May. We appreciate the support we get from President Muhammad Husni Mubarak. We are sure his support for the Palestinians, alongside the support from his brother His Majesty King Husayn, is very effective and important for the final stage negotiations. These negotiations are the most crucial in the history of the Palestinian people.

[Al-Miliji] Dear listeners, to conclude this dialogue, we thank you and Dr. Ahmad al-Tibi, political adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, on the line between Cairo and Jerusalem. Thank you.

[Al-Tibi] Thank you and congratulations on the 'Id.

Palestinian Affairs: Israeli 'Military Siege' Lifted

JN2302085096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At 0400 this morning, the Israeli occupation forces lifted the military siege imposed on the Palestinian territories more than a week ago. A military spokesman said that citizens carrying the necessary permits will be allowed to travel to Israel. The military spokesman added that Jericho, Qalqilyah, and the village of al-Zahiriyah in the Hebron district remain closed military areas which Israelis are not allowed to enter.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Steering Committee Discusses Hebron Redeployment

JN2302115796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 23 Feb 96

[Report on Palestinian-Israeli Steering and Monitoring Committee meeting in "occupied" Jerusalem on 22 February by 'Adil al-Za'nun — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian and Israeli sides in the Steering and Monitoring Committee in charge of implementing the temporary interim agreement have agreed to form a joint committee to implement redeployment from Hebron in March. Moreover, a committee was formed for the transfer of civil powers to the National Authority in Hebron, and another committee,

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headed by Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat and Yo'el Singer, was formed to discuss temporary international presence in Hebron and a number of Palestinian territories.

After the meeting which lasted for six and a half hours, Salah 'Ulayyan, the committee's secretary told Voice of Palestine that the Israeli side pledged to commit itself to the date set for redeployment from Hebron. The Palestinian side protested the Israeli procrastination in redeployment from Hebron.

During the committee's meeting, the two sides discussed many important issues, and solutions were reached on a number of them, including the military siege on the West Bank and Gaza Strip that was lifted at dawn today. 'Ulayyan said that the Palestinian side demanded the implementation of the agreements dealing with the release of male and female prisoners, especially since there are hundreds of prisoners that meet the necessary conditions and standards, but who have not yet been released. He said that the issue of 24 female prisoners was solved, while Israeli legal procedures dealing with four female prisoners whom Israel refuses to release, have not been finalized. He added that this issue will be discussed during the joint ministerial committee meeting.

Regarding safe passages, 'Ulayyan said that a committee headed by 'Urayqat and Singer was formed to finalize a protocol dealing with safe passages, given there still are 12 points of difference. Regarding settlement expansion and the building of bypass roads, 'Ulayyan said that the Israeli side is violating the agreement even though it pledged not to confiscate land. Regarding industrial zones, the two sides agreed to begin work in three industrial zones during the first stage. These zones are in Karni in Gaza, in which the United States is ready to build the infrastructure, and in al-Muqaybilah in Janin and Khadduri in Tulkarm, which Germany is ready to support.

Regarding Rachel and Joseph's Tombs, 'Ulayyan said that the two sides are committed to what was agreed on. He added that a joint committee, headed by Jamil al-Tarifi and Oren Shahor, will visit the site. The Palestinian side demanded the removal of the Israeli Army camp in the area around Joseph's tomb so that Muslims can visit the tomb.

The issue of expanding Jericho will be discussed during President Yasir 'Arafat's next meeting with Shim'on Peres. The Steering and Monitoring committee decided to hold its next meeting 12-15 March.

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Algeria

Algeria: Ex-FIS Officials To Meet in Turkey; Kebir Death Plot Foiled

MM2202142996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 22 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "New Salvation Front Leadership To Be Announced From Turkey; Germany Foils Attempt To Assassinate Rabah Kebir"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — Reliable Algerian sources confirmed to AL-HAYAH yesterday that a number of Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] founding leaders and deputies who won in the canceled 1991 elections will meet at the end of the month to form a new leadership for the FIS.

This information coincides with corroborated reports of the foiling of an attempt to assassinate Shaykh Rabah Kebir, the most prominent FIS official abroad. Sources close to the FIS official, who lives in Germany, have said that security measures around Kebir have been reinforced in an unprecedented manner. [passage omitted]

The sources close to Kebir declined to accuse a specific quarter of targeting him. However, they said that the German police is in possession of "very delicate information" about a plan to assassinate the FIS leader abroad. [passage omitted]

At another level, it has been learned that a number of FIS founders intend to hold a broadly based conference in Turkey at the end of the month to announce the formation of an official bureau to represent the FIS. The conference will be hosted by Shaykh Zebda Benazzouz, one of the FIS founders who were removed from its leadership following the Batna conference in 1991 when a number of [FIS] shura council members differed with the FIS leadership, headed by Shaykhs Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, over the "peaceful strike" (civil disobedience) issue in the middle of that year. A number of prominent figures abandoned the FIS leadership at the time, among them Ahmed Merani (the minister currently assigned the religious affairs portfolio), Bachir Fekih, and Hachemi Sahnouni. While a number of leaders moved to the forefront of the FIS leadership after leading it to victory in the legislative elections, among them Shaykhs Abdelkader Hachani, Rabah Kebir, Mohamed Said, and Othman Aissani.

It is not known exactly who will attend the meeting to be held in Turkey, where Zebda Benazzouz has been living since 1992. He works in trade. However, Algerian sources have confirmed to AL-HAYAH that a number of former shura council members and a number of FIS deputies who won in the canceled 1991 elections will attend the meeting in Turkey.

The "former FIS officials" conference is bound to increase the severity of the splits inside the outlawed Front. While a number of FIS founders inside Algeria, headed by Shaykh Othman Aissani, are seeking to form a new Islamic party bringing together FIS leaders (and it is believed that these founders are coordinating with Zebda Benazzouz to prepare for the broadly based conference at the end of the month), a number of other FIS officials insist that the FIS leadership is represented only by Shaykhs Abassi Madani, Ali Belhadj, Kemal Kamazi, Abdelkader Boukhamkham, Ali Djedi, Abdelkader Omar, Noureddine Chikara, Abdelkader Hachani, the Executive Committee abroad (headed by Rabah Kebir), and the Islamic Salvation Army (headed by Madani Mezrak). This tendency says that it is the real tendency representing the FIS and that any attempt to circumvent this pyramidal leadership "will not succeed." [passage omitted]

Algeria: Economic Relations With France Increasing

LD2202134896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Indications about the reactivation of economic relations between Algeria and France have started to appear on the horizon. The occasion is the agreement on the mutual protection of investments between the two countries. Hocine Bourada reports:

[Bourada] Algerian-French cooperation was consolidated after Paris agreed to sign an agreement on the mutual protection of investments between the two countries.

French companies have started to invest in Algeria, including the petroleum company Total which signed a contract with SONATRACH, the value of which is estimated at $850 million.

French investments in Algeria are currently estimated at about 1 billion French francs [FF] in the energy field and food industries.

It is known that the volume of French exports to Algeria has reached about 13 billion FF in 1994. This puts it at the top of the countries dealing with Algeria. [passage omitted]

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Egypt

Egypt: King Fahd Calls Mubarak; Various Topics Discussed

NC2302073596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak received a telephone call from the custodian of the two holy mosques, the Saudi monarch King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. The two leaders exchanged congratulations on the blessed 'Id al-Fitr. President Mubarak wished the custodian of the two holy mosques good health and progress and prosperity for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In their telephone call the two leaders discussed various topics of interest to the two fraternal countries.

Egypt: Editorial Views 'Puzzle' of Husayn Kamil's Defection, Return

NC2302070496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2225 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 22 Feb (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AKHBAR says the farce that was the defection of Husayn Kamil al-Tikriti, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's son-in-law, to Jordan was designed to cause a media furor that would act as a smokescreen for events inside Iraq, divert the attention of the Iraqi public, and attempt to expose the people working against the regime inside and outside the country.

In an article published by AL-AKHBAR on Friday [23 February], Chief Editor Jalal Duwaydar ridicules the U.S. agencies expressing astonishment that the defecting son-in-law and his companions had returned to Baghdad.

Writing under the headline "The Puzzle of Saddam's Son-in-Law," Duwaydar asks: How could those agencies not have expected things to happen the way they did, particularly as CIA representatives met him, interrogated him for days, and then followed up his case with the help of the Jordanian authorities?

Duwaydar asks: Did these agencies know the details of this puzzle and pretend to believe it or did members of the Iraqi opposition inside Iraq expose the facts and convey them to the opposition front abroad, making it refuse to cooperate with the defecting in-law and cast doubt on his story?

Duwaydar concludes his article with the words: The return of the fugitive son-in-law and his family to Saddam Husayn's embrace did not enjoy the same media attention as his defection. This does not make Saddam happy.

AL-AKHBAR devotes its editorial to the same issue. Under the headline "Is There a Secret Involved in the Return of Saddam's Two Sons-in-Law?," the paper says that a question remains over the wish of the United States and its allies to keep Saddam Husayn in power.

It adds: If any international political expert can publicly answer the question, he will also be implicitly answering the persistent questions about the mystery surrounding the defection to Jordan of Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil, his brother, and their wives, the sisters [as received] of Saddam Husayn, and their voluntary return to Baghdad after six months.

The paper continues: Whatever the facts, one thing is certain: The conjurer's hat is still full of tricks. It will not surprise us if he continues to play games with his opponents who lie in wait for him and occasionally surprise them with a new and unexpected ploy that will confuse them further and complicate their perplexed quest to get rid of him.

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Cleric Claims Arrests, Beatings During 'Id al-Fitr

NC2202193896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Bahraini cleric Hamzah al-Diri by 'Isam Hasan; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Your eminence Shaykh Hamzah al-Diri. World news agencies have reported that the Bahrain Freemen Movement has appealed to the Bahraini people not to celebrate the 'Id al-Fitr in solidarity with the constitutional demands. What do you know about the people's response to this appeal?

[Al-Diri] Information available to us indicates that there has been an unparalleled response by the people. We expected this because we are well acquainted with our people's feelings of pain and anger with this state and the authorities, which have not given anyone the opportunity to celebrate the 'Id. Oppression has entered every house. The riot police raided houses in several areas two days before the 'Id and even on the 'Id's eve. They violated the people's houses, clubbed women, and arrested men and even children under 11 years old. The response was very satisfying and widespread. The people performed the 'Id prayers with the majority of them wearing black and then went to the cemeteries, particularly the martyrs' cemeteries. They then visited the martyrs' families. This underlines the peaceful nature and ways followed by the opposition and people in resisting tyranny and the unbelievable oppression by the Al Khalifah authorities.

From a position of responsibility, we warn the state and authority that it should never deceive itself that foreign backing will bring it security and stability regardless of how much backing it gets. Security and stability has to come through the people and it will not get them if it does not effect a reconciliation with its people and return to the right path. The right path, which the opposition and all the people are demanding, is the path of dialogue and of responding to the demands, foremost of which are the restoration of constitutional government and parliamentary life, that is an elected national council. The authorities will be the loser and not the people if they do not respond to these demands and return to the path of dialogue. The state is violating the people and regards them as dead. The officials' statements are always threats and menaces. It is telling the people: You are dead whether you stay silent and do not make any demands or you do make demands. You are dead in both cases. When the people start to realize that they will die, they will try to harm the authorities before dying.

[Hasan] Thank you Shaykh Hamzah al-Diri.

Bahrain: Armored Cars, Heavy Police Said Deployed Following Demonstrations

JN2202195596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1900 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Police forces were deployed heavily in Bahrain following demonstrations in which security forces fired rubber bullets at demonstrators, according to residents.

In telephone interviews, the residents said armored carriers were deployed in central Manama and police personnel had surrounded Shiite residential areas. Military personnel, armed with machine guns, are guarding public buildings.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Information Minister on Husayn Kamil's Return, Other Issues

LD2202150596 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1328 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Washington, 22 Feb — Kuwaiti Minister of Information Shaykh Sa'ud Nasir al-Sabah described Iraqi General Husayn Kamil's defection from Iraq and return to Baghdad as "a scene from a Hollywood film."

He made this remark in an address on foreign policy at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy [a pro-Israeli think tank] in the presence of a number of U.S. officials and some diplomats from the Gulf and Middle East states.

Shaykh Sa'ud stated in his address: "I did not think for one second that Husayn Kamil's defection was genuine," describing him as a war criminal. [passage omitted]

He added that the war of liberating Kuwait from Iraqi occupation [the Gulf War] "was a unique event in history." Yet Saddam's remaining in power is a threat to Kuwait and the whole Gulf region. He added: "We cannot continue living in peace as long as Saddam Husayn and his threats are there." [passage omitted]

Shaykh Sa'ud said: "Saddam Husayn must be removed from power," pointing out that Kuwait and its allies are still facing a threat from the Iraqi regime, adding that "we live in a crisis as long as Saddam is there."

He said that the main issue is the potential alternative to Saddam Husayn. He stressed the need for the establishment of a democratic regime in Iraq that would

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respect human rights and neighboring countries without interfering in their internal affairs.

He added: "This way we may be demanding, I think, an ideal thing that may be impossible."

Shaykh Sa'ud wondered if it was possible for a civil war to break out in Iraq following the end of Saddam Husayn's rule, which would have an effect on the State of Kuwait.

Shaykh Sa'ud condemned the visit to Baghdad by the American Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan but he did not refer to him by name. He described him as "an individual who is confused over determining who is responsible for committing the crimes against humanity." [passage omitted]

He called for the consolidation of relations among the Gulf states to defend the region. He also rejected the idea of the Damascus Declaration being an alternative to the Arab League.

He expressed optimism that a lot has to be done in the Gulf Cooperation Council and he said that the Kuwaiti liberation war had proven the importance of the existence of this council as a unit for security.

As for peace in the Middle East, Shaykh Sa'ud said that Kuwait completely supported peace in the Middle East, remarking that the region had seen enough wars and confrontations in its history.

He said: "We wish the peace process the best possible success and the quicker, the better."

He expressed optimism that Syria and Lebanon will reach an agreement soon with Israel.

Qatar

Qatar: Minister Sends Message to Omani Counterpart on GCC Meeting

JN2302081396 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 0530 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, the foreign minister, sent a message to His Excellency Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs in the sisterly Sultanate of Oman, chairman of the current session of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC]. The message deals with Qatar's request to hold an emergency meeting of the GCC Ministerial Council in Oman, the current chairman of the GCC, to acquaint the sisterly GCC member states with the circumstances of the abortive vile plot to undermine Qatar's security and stability.

Qatar: Minister Receives Letter From Russian Defense Minister

JN2202115996 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1030 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Abdallah Al Thani, minister of state for defense affairs and deputy commander in chief of the Armed Forces, received a letter from Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev.

The QATARI NEWS AGENCY learned that the letter, relayed by Russian Ambassador to Qatar (Igor Milikhov) during his meeting with the minister of state for defense affairs, concerns relations between the two friendly states and means to strengthen and improve them.

During the meeting, the Russian ambassador voiced the Russian Government's denunciation of the vile, abortive plot that aimed to undermine security and stability in Qatar. He stressed that Russia supports and respects Qatar's sovereignty and seeks to strengthen and improve bilateral relations on all levels.

Yemen

Yemen: Salih Congratulates King Fahd on Resumption of Duties

JN2202191596 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih sent the following cable of congratulations to His Majesty King Fahd of Saudi Arabia:

Dear brother, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques: God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you. We were overwhelmed by joy when we received the news that you resumed your duties after God granted you a complete recovery. As I send my warmest congratulations to you personally and to the fraternal people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I beseech Almighty God to grant you good health so that you can continue your leading role in serving your country and the Arab and Islamic nations.

I am confident that relations between our two fraternal and neighboring countries will witness further development, God willing. May God preserve you. We wish you good health and your people further progress and prosperity under your wise leadership. Please accept my best regards.

[Signed] Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih

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Iraq: Baghdad TV Reports UN Chief's Remarks on Oil-for-Food Talks

JN2202204996 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali today, Thursday, briefed the Security Council on the outcome of the first round of technical talks between Iraq and the United Nations, which ended on 19 February.

Emerging from the Security Council consultations, the UN secretary general told reporters that he is awaiting the outcome of contacts by Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation to the talks, with the Iraqi Government. He added that he hopes the talks resume as soon as possible.

It is worth noting that the UN secretary general previously expressed his complete satisfaction with the outcome of the technical talks between Iraq and the United Nations. He pointed out that he views the unofficial working paper prepared by the two delegations as a positive step. He added that he is highly satisfied with the progress made in the talks.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY on 20 February, Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said that the talks between the Iraqi and UN delegations addressed all aspects of the oil-for-food formula. He added that the talks were conducted in a quiet and businesslike atmosphere with a view to reaching a common understanding of all aspects of the issue. He said this confirms the positive nature of the talks.

'Aziz pointed out that the Iraqi leadership will examine a report by the Iraqi technical delegation. He added that Iraq and the UN secretary general will hold consultations on a date for subsequent talks and also on the method of conducting such talks. He said this might take place in March.

Iraq: Paper Views 'Positive Results' of Iraqi-UN Talks

JN2302105196 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0910 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 23 Feb (INA)—AL-THAWRAH describes the positive results produced by the first round of talks between Iraq and the United Nations on the exchange of oil for food and medicine as representing both parties' real and serious desire to reach an agreement that secures a final and complete end to the unjust siege.

In an article today, the newspaper, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says the most important thing to emerge from the technical talks, which were conducted in a calm and businesslike manner, was the open and clear relationship between Iraq and the United Nations, which several hostile quarters tried to harm using all possible means of pressure, blackmail, and deception.

The paper adds: Iraq's serious desire to realize the objectives for which it began the talks, and the full satisfaction with the results of the first round announced by the UN secretary general following the end of the first round of talks showed the UN desire to realize a satisfactory formula for the talks on exchanging oil for food and medicine and to complete these talks as soon as possible.

AL-THAWRAH emphasizes that the Iraqi people's suffering as a result of the siege has effectively influenced international public opinion and the various political circles in the world to the extent that the United States became unable to confront the insistent calls for lifting the siege and providing the basic humanitarian needs of the Iraqis. The paper says the talks between Iraq and the United Nations were the result of these calls and a natural development of the efforts of Iraq and the good people in the world to eliminate the U.S. pressure.

Concluding, the newspaper says this development is an important step forward that will not be reversed, adding that the results of the talks on exchanging oil for food and medicine will undoubtedly be the basis of the talks that will be held next March to complete this subject fully in a satisfactory and just manner that, in turn, will be the necessary prelude to a final and full lifting of the siege and implementation of Paragraph 22 of UN Security Council Resolution 687.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil Tells UAE Paper No Weapons Secrets Revealed

NC2202133096 Paris AFP in English 1313 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Feb 22 (AFP)—A top Iraqi defector who returned home has denied giving away Baghdad's weapons secrets to the United States and United Nations, in an interview published here Thursday [22 February].

General Husayn Kamil Hasan, a son-in-law of President Saddam Husayn, dismissed US reports that he had handed over sensitive information about Iraq's biological and chemical weapons while in Amman.

"I have not said anything because Iraq, while I was there, had already completed the elimination of all

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weapons of mass destruction," he told the Emirates newspaper AL-KHALIJ on Monday, a day before returning to Iraq.

"Nothing was left ... [ellipsis as received] no more weapons and no more substances or factories that could produce such weapons. It was not me who disclosed this but Baghdad which has uncovered all its cards. I did not reveal more than Baghdad did."

Hasan, a former industry minister and head of Iraq's weapons programmes, went back on a pardon after six months in Jordan where he met US and UN officials and made contacts with the opposition.

The general said he had no quarrel with Saddam, despite calling for his overthrow after fleeing to Amman in August. He also slammed calls in Jordan for a federation in Iraq.

The general acknowledged having had contacts with the Iraqi opposition but not with those who are "spying against Iraq."

Another United Arab Emirates newspaper, AL-BAYAN, said Wednesday that Saddam fooled the world into thinking his son-in-law had defected when in fact he was sent to gather intelligence about the opposition.

But opposition figures, ruling out a ruse on the part of the Iraqi president, said Hasan had no choice but to return after failing to win over the opposition. They predicted he would pay with his life.

Iraq: INC 'Never Misled' by Husayn Kamil's Opposition Claims

NC2202162696 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The unified Iraqi National Congress [INC] yesterday stressed that it was never misled by the claims of defector Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil that he was willing to join the Iraqi opposition. The INC, which includes most factions of the Iraqi opposition, said the crimes perpetrated by the son-in-law of the Iraqi dictator while in power prevent the opposition from accepting him into its ranks.

Iraq: Opposition Said Unaffected by Husayn Kamil Return

MM2202160596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by 'Imad al-Furayh: "Iraqi Opposition Does Not Pay Much Attention to Husayn Kamil Story, Exchanges Views Over Motives Behind Defection and Return"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, Amman — The Iraqi opposition abroad has not paid much attention to former Iraqi official Husayn Kamil's return to Baghdad. Both those who believe that his defection to Jordan six months ago was planned with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn and those who rule this out agree that the end of the defection of the Iraqi president's son-in-law will not affect the Iraqi opposition, nor does it pose a threat to it. "Because it did not open its doors to him," according to a London-based oppositionist. While another oppositionist believes that Husayn Kamil "has returned to where he should always have been."

Iraqi oppositionists say that the Iraqi president's son-in-law "has done nothing significant for the Iraqi opposition or its plans to topple Saddam Husayn's regime and establish an alternative regime," thus the opposition does not regret his return. The figure who made this statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday, asking to remain anonymous, denied that Husayn Kamil has split or confused the Iraqi opposition.

The oppositionists in question pointed out that the main groups "refused to cooperate with him or to open their doors to him." They said that the opposition adopted "a sound stand, because Husayn Kamil is one of the pillars of the regime the opposition is seeking to replace. He, like (Iraqi President) Saddam Husayn and his senior aides, is responsible for all that has happened in Iraq over the past 20 years."

Some Iraqi oppositionists believe that Husayn Kamil's return to Baghdad is attributable to the fact that "he recently realized that there was no room for the game agreed with Saddam Husayn to continue." Most of the figures contacted by AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT believe that maybe Husayn Kamil left Iraq "because of a dispute with 'Udayy Saddam Husayn, who threatened to kill him," or to save "the Iraqi president's family from death by persuading them to embark on a similar step," or maybe he actually wanted "to bring about a change in the shape of the regime in Baghdad," but "he left the country with great delusions, namely that he would become his uncle's successor. He fell victim to these delusions."

Proponents of this analysis note that none of the opposition forces or regional and international powers concerned with the Iraq issue "responded to the dreams of the young man who held the highest rank in the Iraqi Army."

In the Syrian capital, Damascus, Major General Wafiq al- Samarra'i, former director of military intelligence in Iraq, said that Husayn Kamil's return will not adversely affect the Iraqi opposition's work. He pointed out that the opposition is currently planning to step up its campaign to topple the Iraqi Government.

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Al-Samarra'i, who joined the opposition at the end of 1994 and currently lives in Syria, said that "Husayn Kamil's return is attributable to his frustration." He pointed out that "when the Iraqi president's son-in-law left Iraq, he was hoping to be able to lead the Iraqi opposition and to win the Arab governments' support to topple Saddam, but he was confronted by a bitter reality, and when his dreams collapsed he decided to return to Hell."

On Husayn Kamil's effect on the Iraqi opposition, al-Samarra'i said: "There has been no adverse effect, because the main opposition groups did not trust him or cooperate with him." He ruled out that Kamil's defection was originally arranged with the Iraqi president, "because Saddam gained nothing (from the operation). On the contrary, the negative results of what happened outweigh any positive results."

Maj. Gen. Hasan al-Naqib, former Iraqi chief of staff who lives in Syria, has a different view. He says: "My opinion was and still is that Husayn Kamil's defection was arranged in agreement with the head of the Iraqi regime to explore the situation as regards the opposition." However, al-Naqib agrees that Husayn Kamil's return will have no effect on the Iraqi opposition. He says that "the Iraqi opposition paid no attention to him when he defected, and it will pay no attention to his return now. It is of no significance."

Meanwhile, Iraqis in the Jordanian capital, Amman, say that some sources close to the Jordanian Government confirmed that Husayn Kamil was admitted to an Amman hospital at the end of December after complaining about symptoms of the brain cancer he suffered some years ago.

The sources said that the former Iraqi official is still suffering from this disease, and they believe that his decision to return to Baghdad is linked to this.

Iraqis who were close to Kamil during his stay in Amman say that he was always keen not to attack the Iraqi president personally. One of those who attended a meeting to discuss the political program announced by Husayn Kamil late last year says that he refused to include President Saddam Husayn's name in the statement, and after persistence from some people, he agreed to the phrase "autocratic regime." He also struck off the phrase "the autocratic disposition of Iraq's resources" mentioned in the draft program, replacing it with the phrase "squandering economic resources." He said that the Iraqi president "has not stolen Iraq's money or put it in his pocket." However, he did not hesitate to attack 'Udayy, the Iraqi president's eldest son, and other officials in the Iraqi state.

Iraq: SAIRI Statement on Return of 'Criminal' Husayn Kamil

LD2202182596 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1547 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 22 Feb — The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] said today that the return of Husayn Kamil to Iraq will not give might to the ruling regime in Baghdad but will weaken it further because the differences and conflicts within the family of Saddam Husayn will increase.

A statement published in Arabic here by this Iraqi opposition organization said that Husayn Kamil's case "revealed clearly the moral decadence and political confusion of the tyrant regime of Saddam Husayn and his criminal gang."

The statement pointed out that the real reason for the return of Husayn Kamil, whom it described as a criminal, was the real isolation in which he has been living after "his bad morals and fall" became apparent to his closest relatives after he committed the most horrible crimes against the Iraqi people when he was a member of the ruling gang in Iraq.

In its statement, the SAIRI said that from the outset it took a cautious and reserved stance regarding the fleeing last August of Husayn Kamil, his brother Saddam Kamil, and their wives, daughters of Saddam Husayn.

The Supreme Assembly had called during that period for the need to move toward field action in confronting the regime and to be wary of Western media campaigns attempting to involve the Iraqi opposition in conflicts about the way they dealt with the fleeing of Husayn Kamil, instead of directing their activities against Saddam himself.

The statement stressed the importance of achieving change in Iraq by "effective and wide participation of the Iraqi people and army and their honest elements which have sacrificed lives, blood, and efforts over the past years."

Iraq: Opposition Figures Say Husayn Kamil 'Unlikely To Survive'

NC2202122396 Paris AFP in English 1142 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Report by Acil Tabbara]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dubai, Feb 22 (AFP)—Iraqi opposition leaders said Thursday [22 February] the son-in-law of President Saddam Husayn who defected had no choice but to return to the fold although it is likely to cost General Husayn Kamil Hasan his life.

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Despite his family ties and an apparent pardon from Saddam which cleared the way for his return after six months in Jordan, they said the former industry minister and head of Iraq's secret armaments programmes was unlikely to survive.

"It was in President Saddam Husayn's interests to try to reunite the ruling family, that's why he agreed to pardon Husayn Kamil," said Hamad Bayati, a Shiite Muslim opposition figure.

"But I'm sure he will get rid of him at a later date," said the London representative of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SAIRI), contacted by telephone from Dubayy.

Hasan returned on Tuesday after failing to rally the Iraqi opposition around him.

Mish'al Juburi, one of the few opposition figures who collaborated with the general during his stay in Jordan under King Husayn's protection, agreed his life was in danger since his surprise return.

"Saddam Husayn is not a man to keep his word," said the former Iraqi intelligence official.

"Husayn Kamil himself once told me how an opponent of Saddam went back to Baghdad after receiving assurances that his life would be spared — only to be fed to the dogs," he said.

Other opposition figures said the general was likely to meet his end in an "accident," a favoured practice for dealing with dissent in upper echelons in Iraq.

From the moment Hasan started to hint last week that he would return and praised changes taking place in Iraq, Western diplomats in Baghdad warned it would suicidal.

The opposition said the general had no choice but to go back after having failed to present himself as an alternative to Saddam.

"The return of Husayn Kamil Hasan shows that he was unable to transform himself from a pillar of the regime into a credible opposition leader," said Ahmad Shalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress (INC).

Shalabi pointed out that the opposition coalition had refused to deal with the general because of his past record in suppressing unrest.

"He thought the whole world was going to accept him as the saviour of Iraq. But he went back to Baghdad because his mission was an utter failure," added Bayati.

He stressed the defector failed to build bridges with the opposition or to visit Arab neighbours of Iraq. "Saudi Arabia and Syria refused to have him. Even Jordan dropped him in the end."

Muhammad 'Abd-al Jabbar, another INC official, described the general as "a man thirsty for power, without any political programme but filled with personal ambition."

Hasan was "on the verge of a nervous breakdown" in his last few weeks in Amman because of his isolation, said 'Abd-al Jabbar.

Juburi said the general alienated the few contacts he had, because he could not convert to his new life in an Amman guest palace, without the authoritarian powers he had in Baghdad.

"I went to see him every day for two months in Amman and I discovered he was schizophrenic, a man obsessed with power," he said.

Juburi said that on several occasions, he saw Hasan insult and even threaten to kill people with whom he had been having a friendly conversation just moments earlier.

An official spokesman in Baghdad has said Hasan would be treated as "an ordinary citizen" in line with government policy "allowing the return of any defector who asks to be pardoned."

Nothing has been known of his whereabouts since his return.

In contrast to the opposition, AL-BAYAN newspaper in the United Arab Emirates accused Saddam of fooling the world into thinking Hasan had defected when in fact he was sent to gather intelligence about the opposition camp.

But the United States and UN commission in charge of disarming post-Gulf War Iraq stood by the information that Hasan passed on to them since defecting to Jordan in August.

He defected together with his brother Colonel Saddam Hasan and their two wives, both daughters of Saddam, on August 8. The general called for the president's overthrow at his only Amman press conference four days later.

Iraq: Islamic Opposition Radio Comments on Husayn Kamil's Return

NC2202164196 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Political commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Many international circles have been surprised and astonished by the return of Husayn

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Kamil, dictator Saddam's son-in-law, to the regime's lap. But the opposition has not been surprised by this expected return because it is well acquainted with the nature of the regime and the ruling family, which has established itself on slaughter and terrorism and which cannot exist without this practice.

Most analysts and experts in Iraqi affairs agree that Husayn Kamil's defection, declaration of opposition to the regime, and setting up his base in Jordan for the past six months in the most luxuriant palaces belonging to the Jordanian court were a plot and a scenario planned by two people only, namely dictator Saddam and criminal Husayn Kamil. These analysts point out that this dirty ploy had a number of objectives, the most important of which were:

1. To hold Husayn Kamil responsible for the continued sanctions and for withholding information from the UN investigation committees.

2. To hit the Iraqi opposition abroad with the regime's club. Husayn Kamil was this club. But due to its knowledge of the regime, the opposition escaped safely from this trap, especially the Islamic opposition, which refused to have any dealings with him in any way whatsoever. In a number of separate statements, it regarded him as one of the most senior criminals who have desecrated the Muslims' holy places and killed the innocent sons of our people. It also considered him a clone of Saddam and said that any dealings with Husayn Kamil meant dealing with Saddam.

3. Through Husayn Kamil, the regime wanted to explore the international, regional, and Arab positions and to identify the regimes that are seriously seeking to bring down this regime. But these countries passed this test. Husayn Kamil failed to make contact with all the countries adjoining Iraq with the exception of the host country Jordan. All these countries refused to grant him a visa to enter their territories and banned their ambassadors from talking to him.

The only way that the regime benefited was from the liquidation of the al-Tikrit family members and the reduction in their power. This happened to Wathban Ibrahim, criminal 'Udayy, Sab'awi Ibrahim, and other family members whose intentions were suspected by dictator Saddam. Additionally, Saddam regarded them as a source of danger to his terrorist regime.

Whether Husayn Kamil remains inside or outside the regime will have no effect on the status of the Iraqi opposition in general and the Islamic one in particular or its determination to continue with the jihad and revolution against the regime until either victory or martyrdom. All the regime's men are criminals in the eyes of our people and of humanity. They will be brought to justice no matter how long it takes. We are confident that Saddam's regime will not be saved by Husayn Kamil or by Saddam's criminal ploys. The day when the regime collapses is near, regardless of what it does.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil's Return Said To Give Baghdad Regime 'New Life'

MM2202165496 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 22 Feb 96 p 15

[Editorial: "Husayn Kamil's Defection and Sudden Return"]

[FBIS Translated Text] General Husayn Kamil, former military industrialization minister and son-in-law of the Iraqi president, has returned to Baghdad after staying in Amman for six months as a guest of the Jordanian Government and King Husayn. He was visited by numerous experts of world and Arab intelligence, especially U.S. and British intelligence, to obtain the information in his possession about armaments in his country and the extent of his country's seriousness in dealing with UN inspectors and the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions.

And just as Gen. Kamil's defection was a surprise to many observers, his return is a bigger surprise because of its speed and the arrangements that accompanied it — confirming that the man is a controversial person, whatever the nature of the steps on which he embarks.

Because of the element of surprise in both cases and the man's ability to change his stance from one extreme to another in less than six months, numerous questions have been asked about the seriousness of his opposition and the extent of the Baghdad regime's agreement to embrace him again.

Maybe on that basis it was justifiable for some people to describe the defection as a carefully planned show from the outset, designed to achieve certain objectives, among other things to mislead Western states, give them false information about the military situation in Iraq, and probe their schemes to change the regime and the tools on which they will rely inside and outside the country.

If that was the case, then the regime in Baghdad has shown a degree of political and diplomatic intelligence that reveals the extent of its ability to exploit the circumstances of the Gulf war and the lessons learned from it to achieve a big victory over its enemies. However — and we do not doubt the regime's intelligence, and it has succeeded in standing fast for five years in the face of a harsh blockade and a series of conspiracies — we

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doubt that Gen. Kamil's defection was a pre-planned show.

This defection has inflicted great harm on Iraq and its regime, materially and morally. It was not surprising for President Saddam Husayn and the Iraqi Revolution Command Council to meet and accuse Gen. Kamil of high treason. It is enough that the defection led to delaying the lifting of the blockade for years and prompted Rolf Ekeus to delay submitting his report on the nonexistence of mass destruction weapons in Iraq. It also reduced the enthusiasm of China, France, and Russia for Iraq's view. And it caused them to backtrack on their proposals for a six-month trial period leading to an end to the blockade and allowing Iraq to resume its oil exports.

What is certain is that the Iraqi president has achieved a big political and moral victory with the return of his son-in-law to the family fold. He has proved that Iraq is still safer than some exiles, especially for the regime's sons who have lost their way. And he has displayed magnanimity toward these. More importantly, Gen. Kamil has a lot of information that the regime needs about the opposition and its factions and links, in addition to the schemes of the states sponsoring them in one way or another, by virtue of the contacts he made with them during his short stay in the Jordanian capital.

Gen. Husayn Kamil is a man who assumed high responsibility very quickly and in an unusual manner. He abandoned it when he felt that his ceiling in his country had begun to move downward in favor of others, probably because they were more loyal and competent. I believe that he saw his defection from the regime as a new opportunity to penetrate this ceiling and lead the change which the West is seeking in Iraq. He was disappointed when the opposition refused to rally around him. And U.S. intelligence did not have confidence in him or in his ability to carry out this task.

Perhaps it is fair to say that Gen. Kamil rejected a federation in Iraq and refused to cooperate with the quarters seeking to partition his country into sectarian cantons — which is why his isolation increased recently. But he — who had been at the top of the power structure — should have realized that Iraq's enemies are planning for something bigger, otherwise they would not have deployed more than 500,000 soldiers, 4,000 tanks, and 3,000 aircraft, or dropped 200,000 tonnes of bombs on Iraq.

In brief, we say that just as Gen. Kamil's defection caused some people to believe that the Iraqi regime had begun to erode from within and its days were numbered, his dramatic return has restored matters to their previous status, perhaps to a better status.

If one can say that this return has given the regime in Baghdad a new life, only a few months are left in Gen. Kamil's "media" life, maybe less than the six months he spent in Amman as a prisoner in a splendid royal palace. Saddam Husayn knows best.

Iraq: Islamic Opposition Figure Views Husayn Kamil Situation

NC2202214496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Dr. Abu-Ahmad Ja'fari, "an Iraqi opposition figure," in London, by 'Isam Hasan, in Tehran; date not given; from the "News and Reports" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Hasan] Dr. Abu-Ahmad Ja'fari, some say that during his six-month stay in Jordan and his meetings with some Iraqi opposition figures, Husayn Kamil Hasan knew much about the Iraqi opposition. What do you think?

[Ja'fari] Husayn Kamil undoubtedly succeeded in obtaining some information, but this should not be exaggerated. Much of this information is mentioned in the media and is clearly and publicly discussed. Concerning the political aspect of Husayn Kamil's dealings with the Iraqi opposition, I believe there were three trends in the opposition: The first trend tolerated him, followed him, was happy with his defection, and made positive statements about the defection, but this trend has not been effective. The second trend tried to deal with him secretly and reluctantly, taking a step forward and a step backward. This trend was reluctant, and it changed its position over the six months of Husayn Kamil's defection. The third trend was represented by the early, direct, and unambiguous rejection of Husayn Kamil despite the many mediation attempts and his persistent efforts to obtain a telephone call or arrange a meeting. This position was clear; the Islamic movement firmly and clearly adopted a decisive position, drawing a distinction between Husayn Kamil as a manifestation of the collapse of the ruling family and regime and his serving as an active Iraqi opposition figure. We do not think, therefore, that what Husayn Kamil obtained will be of any value or significance, especially since most of the people he met with, by national and Islamic standards, had no influence or weight in the Iraqi opposition.

[Hasan] Dr. Abu-Ahmad Ja'fari, some say the Iraqi opposition failed to embrace Husayn Kamil, which has frustrated him and thrown him back into the hell of the regime. As a result of this, these people say, the officials of the regime will hardly leave it from now on. What do you think?

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[Ja'fari] This is a good and legitimate question. The Islamic movement, and the Islamic opposition in general, opened its heart to anyone returning from the ruling establishment to the opposition; it did not adopt a tough or hardline position on such a return or cast stones at the returnee, however, the Islamic opposition drew a distinction between someone returning from the establishment's ranks to the ranks of the opposition and between this person becoming, overnight, a pillar of the opposition. It decisively rejected Husayn Kamil as a pillar of the opposition because those who want to serve as leaders of the opposition must have the same spirit, mentality, and reputation as the opposition. This requires a great deal of time and effort. Husayn Kamil, with his blood-stained history, can never occupy such a position. So while the Islamic movement was firm and decisive in its rejection of Husayn Kamil as a leader of the Iraqi opposition, it did not show too much interest in him. It did not threw stones at him or exchange harsh words with him. It only ignored him and dealt with him as a dead, marginal figure that could only be part of the lower ranks of the opposition. I believe that the opposition's position, in general, and the Islamic opposition, in particular, was so mature that it exhausted all objective justifications for any henchmen of the ruling establishment to remain with the regime. If they want to turn their back on the regime, they will find sufficient welcome and acceptance in the opposition, but they themselves do not expect the Iraqi opposition to accept the change from establishment symbols to opposition symbols. The Iraqi opposition is a mature entity in influence, depth, and weight. It has its leaders. It is not suffering a leadership vacuum so that this one man or another can come and assume the leadership. Yes, the heart of the opposition is big, and the heart of our people is bigger, capable of receiving those who repent, however, they must prove that they are really leaving the establishment for the opposition.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil Return May Herald 'Reprisals' Against Jordan

MM2302100496 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 22 Feb 96 p 15

[Article by Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "Beware of Husayn Kamil's Return!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Is it not strange for White House Spokesman Mike McCurry to announce that "this news" (Husayn Kamil's return to his uncle, Saddam Husayn) was "completely unexpected," for State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns to express his "amazement and astonishment," and for the Defense Department (Pentagon) spokesman to find it difficult to explain the reasons for his return? How could it have been unexpected, when those monitoring the Iraqi situation had been talking about this probability for weeks, and Husayn Kamil himself hinted at it over a week ago in direct press statements or through people with whom he met?

At any rate, the U.S. Administration's ignorance is not the subject of discussion here, even though it should worry many of those concerned with the Iraqi issue. The most important thing is that there is a serious possibility that Saddam's recovery of his two daughters and other members of his family could be a prelude to reprisal operations against Jordan. To clarify this, it must be stressed that Saddam's strong desire to take revenge remains primarily aimed against the United States, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. But he added Jordan to these states after King Husayn decided to abandon his former ally and radically change his country's policy toward Iraq. It was no coincidence for him to hint at Jordan as a target for reprisals when he spoke on the anniversary of the Iraqi Army's establishment early in the year of the "jackal" that is trying to snap at "the wounded lion."

Those who know Saddam's vengeful nature, and they include former Iraqi military intelligence chief Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, who has on several occasions pointed to his destructive nature, have no doubt that Saddam will not go quietly or alone. He will be determined to inflict the greatest possible destruction and ruin. On the basis of such a scenario, Saddam might say: "We are all one family, so we stay together or go together."

The problem is that the Iraqi dictator has the required means of destruction in the form of bacteriological weapons and missiles which he concealed from the UN committee entrusted with dismantling mass-destruction weapons (even if he has not concealed long-range missiles, the United Nations has not prevented him from producing or acquiring missiles with a 150-km range, which are capable of carrying Saddam's germs to the neighbors). As is known, Ekeus and members of his committee are completely convinced that Saddam is hiding these germ [weapons] from them, even though Husayn Kamil "assured" them that Saddam had ordered that they be buried in the desert in November 1990. Ekeus said a few days ago that Saddam is prepared to sacrifice anything for the sake of concealing his secrets concerning Iraq's military capabilities. It is most likely that Ekeus told the Iraqis enough to prompt them to believe his assessment [sentence as published].

In the light of Burns' "amazement" and "astonishment" over the news of Husayn Kamil's return to Baghdad, one

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can hardly agree with his assessment that Saddam is no longer in a position to "deceive" the Western states.

It is useful in this context to remind those ridiculing Saddam's ability to deceive the world that the Iraqi dictator continued for four years to deny his possession of bacteriological weapons, and even the existence of a secret program for their production. He continued to deny it even after Husayn Kamil defected to Jordan, where he admitted their existence. And after the UN committee had access to the documents, Ekeus announced with astonishment that the Iraqi bacteriological weapons in question are enough to destroy mankind four times over!

Power and revenge are the only two things motivating everything in Saddam Husayn. Everything apart from that — and this includes his dealings with the United Nations — is merely steps designed to lead him to the end of the game: power and revenge!

Iraq: Trade Ministry Offers Goods at Reduced Prices

JN2202191096 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report from the "Evening Newspaper" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] For the second consecutive day, the Ministry of Trade has continued to offer large quantities of food, nonperishable goods, household appliances, clothes, toys, construction materials, and spare auto parts for sale at its central markets in Baghdad and the governorates and at the pavilions at the Baghdad International Fair at prices lower than those on the local market.

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Israel: Peres Rejects Beilin-'Abbas Paper 'Out of Hand'

TA2302100096 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Feb 96 p A1

[Report by Yo'el Marcus]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says that the Beilin-Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] talks were held without his knowledge. "When I saw the paper among the papers stacked on my table I rejected it and its contents out of hand," he stated.

"Who says we must have a Palestinian state?" asked Peres during our talk. He says we have already implemented the main principle — namely, not to rule over another people. We do not have to rashly subscribe to yesterday's slogans. Before the discussion over the final arrangement, we must give them an opportunity to speak with Jordan. There are border problems, demilitarization issues, and we must avoid unnecessary risks.

As for the Likud gimmick stating that "Peres will divide Jerusalem," the prime minister said: Who built all the neighborhoods in Jerusalem and expanded the city limits if not Labor? Jerusalem was never an Arab capital; whereas, we never had any other capital. When 'Arafat is asked why he refers to Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state, he answers: "Is it prohibited to dream?"

I told him (Peres says) that he can dream, but it takes two to turn a dream into reality. And let me put it unequivocally (he added): In Jerusalem there will not be two governments, two police forces, two administrations, or two capitals.

Israel: Israelis, Palestinians Deny Accord on Permanent Arrangement

TA2202175096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Italicized passages recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan denied the existence of any document dealing with the establishment of a Palestinian state, the status of Jerusalem, or any other matter pertaining to a final settlement. He noted, however, that there had been unofficial contacts with the Palestinians.

This reaction now from the director general of the Foreign Ministry, Uri Savir:

[Savir] *The only negotiations that took place — that were authorized on any of the Palestinian-Israeli issues — were carried out by Mr. Abu-'Ala' [Ahmad Quray'] and myself on the interim agreement, and the permanent status negotiations will start as of May 4, and nothing that happened so far is in any way official or authorized, and we still have to get to all of these issues.*

And reporter Mark Weiss has this reaction from Palestinian negotiator Abu-'Ala':

[Abu-'Ala', in progress] *...to have a secret agreement. The permanent status is a part of the agreement; it is the main issue of the negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis.*

Both Peres and 'Arafat were said to have reservations, but for differing reasons. The prime minister said that the issue of Jerusalem had to await a final settlement. He also objected to the lack of linkage between a Palestinian state and Jordan; and thirdly, he rejected the proposal to relinquish the Jordan Valley.

Likud Knesset chairman Moshe Qatzav reacted for the opposition:

[Qatzav] *Mr. Peres, I believe that he reject, but he is not real rejection. He reject because we are at the evening of the election, and he is afraid by publishing this initiative it has very negative impact on the Israeli voters, so Mr. Peres, this moment, he prefers to reject it despite the fact that it true.*

Interior Minister Hayim Ramon claimed that the report was part of the Likud's collection of lies. He said the opposition was shattering the consensus for electoral considerations.

And Ahmad al-Tibi, an adviser to 'Arafat, said he had spoken to Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] after reading the report in HA'ARETZ. He declared that no agreement was signed, adding that he and Abu-Mazin believe this latest report was connected with the Israeli election campaign.

Talks on a final settlement are due to begin on the 4th of May, three weeks before the general elections.

Israel: Beilin — Plan Not an Agreement, But Good Basis for Talks

TA2202182596 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1500 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Interview with Minister Yosi Beilin by Dan Margalit in Tel Aviv — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Margalit] Good evening to you, Minister Yosi Beilin. What the Likud said was correct — you did conduct negotiations on the future of Jerusalem — and your denial was very shaky.

[Beilin] At the permanent arrangement stage we will have to hold negotiations, since Jerusalem is one of the issues on the agenda....

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[Margalit, interrupting] But you have held negotiations already. Even though you did not reach an agreement, you still discussed details such as expanding Jerusalem — apparently so as to be able to partition it.

[Beilin] Look, the details are very interesting. Still, in my opinion, the issue of partitioning Jerusalem is simply impossible, and the Palestinians too understand this, just as they understand we will be unable to cede sovereignty over Jerusalem in the permanent arrangement.

[Margalit] But you spoke of two administrations in the city, did you not?

[Beilin] No. Whatever else happens, Jerusalem will be a single city, the capital of a single country, an intact, united city under our sovereignty — and no playing with words will be to any avail here. Let me state that no negotiations took place. Still, I must add that this publication is very important. It is also important for anybody who panics as a result of the Likud's statements to understand that reference here is to the ability to reach an agreement with the Palestinians that will surely satisfy most of our requirements and needs.

[Margalit] Although you say you did not hold negotiations, the document you reportedly came up with is important as a preamble for real negotiations, as was the case with Oslo. Or do I fail to understand you perhaps?

[Beilin] Maybe, Dan. I am sure you understand well, although I may not be explaining sufficiently. Let me tell you the following: Reference here is to numerous talks, not only with Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], but with many others, including Nabil Sha'th, and 'Arafat himself. In the wake of these numerous talks, which lasted over two years — and which have not ended yet; I am still talking with them — I can reach the conclusion that the common denominator is largely different from the slogans emanating from the mosques, for example.

[Margalit] Minister Beilin, let me tell you what is written in the papers today. Among other things, it is noted that you understand that a Palestinian state will emerge, that most settlers in the territories will remain under Israeli sovereignty indeed, and that the Jordan Valley will be passed on to Palestinian control in 2007. It is not only Israelis that will dislike this; King Husayn is not likely to like it either. This also alludes to what Labor's Nisim Zvili said a few days ago to the effect that the Jordan Valley settlers should think about a possible evacuation. Why are you giving up the Jordan Valley in this document?

[Beilin] I have not given up anything. What was advertised is partly correct — it is partly a result of these talks — but it is also partly inaccurate. I will not elaborate on these specifics, some of which, as I have said, are very inaccurate. I can say that in all, reference is to feelers that proved that we have something to talk about and that there is also a partner for the talks. Furthermore, we need not fear that in order to reach a permanent peace with the Palestinians we, God forbid, will have to accept the preconditions that they have made public to date.

[Margalit] This is very interesting still. According to the press reports, the Palestinians agree to have their state demilitarized, agree to have most settlers remain under Israeli sovereignty, and so on and so forth. Why then do you not tell your party that this is an excellent agreement? You should tell your party to go with it into the elections, should you not?

[Beilin] It is not an excellent agreement, since it is not an agreement. If it were an agreement, it could well be an excellent one.

[Margalit] It is an excellent plan then. Why do you not tell them that? Why do you not say that you, Yosi Beilin, can obtain this from Abu-Mazin?

[Beilin] I think that in the negotiations with the Palestinians we will be able to obtain several components that are vital for us and that will be acceptable to most of the Israeli nation, including the settlers. Therefore, I am very optimistic about the permanent arrangement. This arrangement has not been achieved yet....

[Margalit, interrupting] Are you disappointed with Peres' refusal to accept the outline laid down in this memorandum of understanding [last three words in English] at present?

[Beilin] Look, the argument was over the very opening of negotiations about the permanent arrangement a year ago. I tried to convince the Israeli leadership to open these negotiations then, but my opinion was rejected. I cannot be disappointed about an agreement that does not exist. [passage omitted]

Israel: Peres' Office Reacts to U.S. Spying Charges

TA2302062796 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A report issued by the U.S. Congress' General Accounting Office [GAO] states that Israel is wiretapping the Pentagon and stealing sensitive U.S. technology. The report, which does not mention Israel by name, claims that the spying activity is inspired by Israel and conducted by Israeli companies that have contracts with the Pentagon. [passage omitted]

Prime Minister's Office sources say that the Washington report has still not been received by the Israeli Embassy in the city, adding that this is not a congressional report,

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rather a report issued by the GAO — an investigative body working for Congress. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports that the sources emphasized that the report does not explicitly refer to Israel and that the only clear charge raised against it was published in a commentary in THE WASHINGTON TIMES.

Israel: U.S. Request for Police Contingent to Bosnia Causes Concern

TA2302084896 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Feb 96 p A1

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The United States has asked Israel to participate in a multinational police force to be sent to Bosnia to safeguard the peace after the military forces are withdrawn. The request, which was described as theoretical in nature, was also relayed to other countries.

The request for sending Israeli policemen to Bosnia was relayed by the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv to Eytan Bentzur, deputy director general of the Foreign Ministry. Sources in the foreign minister's bureau yesterday said that Minister Ehud Baraq "is holding consultations with the Foreign Ministry's professional echelon about the American request and its ramifications."

Political sources yesterday expressed concern about the U.S. request to send Israelis for police duty in a Muslim country, in view of the activity in Bosnia of Islamic terror elements who are aided by Iran. The sources noted that Bosnia has no diplomatic relations with Israel and that, at present, the Israeli police are making great efforts to implement the agreement with the Palestinians and preserve law and order in the elections campaign period.

At the same time, Israel will find it difficult to reject a direct American request after it has already sent a police contingent to Haiti. [passage omitted]

Israel: Diplomat Deported From Moscow To Be Given 'Senior' Post

TA2302115796 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 23 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Ilana Baum and Dimitriy Prokofyev]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Israeli diplomat who was deported from Russia three weeks ago after having been accused of espionage will be given a senior government post. [passage omitted]

Senior Israeli Foreign Ministry officials claimed that the Russians were very discrete about the Israeli diplomatic affair, but that Israel had violated understandings reached by the two countries. "The official report by the Russian Federal Security Service, according to which the Israeli who was deported from Moscow was a Mosad agent, came in reaction to a series of reports in Israel that violated agreements between the two parties."

Israel: Russia Demands Return of Ownership Rights in Jerusalem

TA2202145696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Feb 96 p A6

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Russian Foreign Ministry has addressed a sharp letter to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in which it is demanding that Israel live up to a promise it made to return to Russia ownership of property in Jerusalem formerly owned by the Soviet Union.

Aleksandr Bovin, Russian ambassador to Israel, in the past few days met Prime Minister Peres and Foreign Minister Baraq and reminded them that the senior Israeli political echelon had announced its recognition of Russia as the legal heir to Soviet property, but that the ownership registration is being delayed and promises are not being fulfilled. [passage omitted]

Israeli Government sources yesterday said they believe that the hard line recently adopted by the Russians stems from political reasons — namely, their desire to demonstrate Russia's importance. The sources added that the delays in the ownership registration stem from technical and legal reasons. "The promises were made on the political level and reflect our policy. The Russian representatives know very well that the cause of the delay is legal and technical in nature," they said.

Israel: Peres — No Need To Remove Any Settlement

TA2202194096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said this evening that he does not see the need to remove any settlement, and the settlements in the Jordan Valley too will remain where they are. He added that from now until election day, the government will continue to hold onto the helm of the economy and will not bow to wage demands or to pressures for a devaluation. Mr. Peres spoke in Shefayim, at a gathering of Labor youth. Our correspondent Pe'erli Shahar reports that the assembly participants chanted "Peres — the king of Israel."

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Israel: West Bank Village Closed; Israelis Cannot Enter Qalqilyah

TA2202175896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier was slightly injured by stones hurled at his vehicle in the village of al-Zahiriyah, south of Hebron. Our correspondent Yoni Ben- Menahem reports that as a result the IDF declared al-Zahiriyah a closed military zone.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 1500 GMT on 22 February adds that "the army is barring all Israelis from entering the West Bank town of Qalqilyah for security reasons. However, it has canceled the entry ban into Nabulus and Ramallah. The closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, imposed last week on Palestinians, is continuing."]

Israel: IDF Declares Nabulus Closed Military Zone

TA2302085496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Early this morning the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] lifted the closure on the territories. This morning, however, the IDF declared Nabulus a closed military zone and banned Israelis from entering the city until further notice for security reasons. Israelis are also barred from entering Qalqilyah.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the Civil Administration in Judaea and Samaria has started posting its representatives at IDF roadblocks in Judaea and Samaria. These representatives are familiar with the regulations governing entrance procedures to Israel and are slated to ease the Palestinians' passage through the roadblocks, thus preventing unnecessary friction between them and the IDF soldiers.

Israel: Closure on Territories Lifted

TA2302055096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was lifted at 0400 this morning. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] sealed off the territories 10 days ago following intelligence reports that Palestinian terrorists were planning more attacks. Israeli sources say there are still warnings about terror raids, but nevertheless it was decided to allow Palestinian workers to return to their jobs in Israel.

Israel: IDF Encounters 'Terror Squad' in Gaza Strip

TA2302102196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman reports that an IDF force encountered a terror squad near the Nahal 'Oz roadblock in northern Gaza Strip. The IDF force did not sustain any injuries. One of the terrorists was apparently hurt.

Israel: Shin Bet Chief Facing Media, 'Terror' Problems

TA2202172296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 20 Feb 96 p B1

[Commentary by Ze'ev Schiff: "Ayalon's Missions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Just as Major General 'Ami Ayalon entered office as Shin Bet chief, the Shamgar Commission ended its gathering of testimony. This week the commission will work behind closed doors toward preparing its final report. The attorneys of the seven officials who were warned by the commission — six of them Shin Bet personnel and the seventh a police officer — were asked to submit their summations in writing. Justice Me'ir Shamgar requested that the summations not exceed 25 pages in length. This does not change the fact that the commission is being deluged by material. No less than 700 pages of testimony have been submitted to it. And this is not all. The Shin Bet has submitted to the commission hundreds of dossiers including various secret documents. The police submitted less material.

The new Shin Bet chief could certainly notice to what extent Justice Shamgar was angry about any leaks from the discussions. He fumed even when the published material was simply inaccurate. Perhaps he thought this was premeditated misinformation, as was indeed occasionally the case. Shamgar was probably concerned about breaches of secrecy. 'Ami Ayalon will certainly conclude from this that he must seal off the Shin Bet from every direction. Even though the leaks from the commission's sessions did not necessarily emanate from Shin Bet circles, he plans to seal off his organization and keep it out of the headlines. For him this is a logical approach after all it has gone through. He wants to calm down the Shin Bet, even though the organization is apparently not undergoing a crisis in the wake of its failure.

Even before Rabin's assassination the Shin Bet had actually lost control over its relations with the media. Karmi Gilon wanted to tamp down these relations after the great openness shown by his predecessor, Ya'aqov

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Peri. When a special Shin Bet committee discussed whether the organization should appoint a spokesman, a decision was finally adopted that the time was not ripe. Ayalon may now take this trend to an extreme. In the past Avraham Shalom adopted this approach, and when the moment came in which he wanted to explain himself he had no address to turn to.

In due time Ayalon himself will reach the conclusion that in the Israel of 1996 he cannot dissociate the Shin Bet from the public in the midst of which it operates and whose support any intelligence organization requires. The conclusion, therefore, is that while intelligence secrecy should be preserved, the organization should not cut itself off from its environment — and this environment includes the Knesset and its committees as well as the political leadership. Such links are almost impossible to maintain, however, if one is faced by a hostile media.

The openness and good contacts with the media, however, are not at the top of Ayalon's list of missions. This list is headed by Islamic terrorism. Second place goes to dealing with the extreme Jewish right wing. Let me start with the second mission. All signs indicate that the 'Amir brothers are not a few scattered wild weeds. There is growing information indicating that in closed circles these people are starting to raise their heads in the wake of Rabin's assassination. Law enforcement is abating, which is inviting the extremists to come out of their holes. Since the Knesset election campaign has opened it has been apparent that the campaign will be accompanied by wild incitement.

This is the fertile soil in which the 'Amir brothers have blossomed. We have no shortage of extremists willing to murder in order to "save" Jerusalem. The danger is also directed at Palestinian leaders who reside in Jerusalem. The prime target, however, is the Temple Mount. Our extremists have already attempted to harm it in the past, and are capable of doing so again in order to blow up the entire political process.

Islamic terrorism is in a period of hiatus, for various reasons. This is a temporary situation. Islamic Jihad's very existence and future depend on the continuation of terrorism. After our withdrawal from the populated areas in the territories, Shin Bet officials understand that they need the cooperation of the Palestinian Preventive Security Service and the Palestinian political leadership. This is a complicated mission, because at the same time the Shin Bet must cultivate — and even improve — its intelligence and sources as well as its operational ability among the Palestinians. In this issue the Shin Bet has a close partner in the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch. These two organizations must make sure, however, that the joint missions do not result in uncalled-for functional duplication and wasteful rivalry between them.

In the sphere of counterintelligence, on the other hand, the Shin Bet will stand alone — granted, this is not its main mission. Israel is confronted by three main rivals: Russia, Egypt, and recently Iran as well. The last party causes concern not because of its great ability, but rather due to its contacts with the terror organizations. The level of Egyptian intelligence is mediocre, but of late the Egyptians have grown more daring. Had Israel operated in the same manner, we would have heard horror stories about it from the Egyptians. The most complicated mission is against the Russians — because of their impressive performance and because we do not want any confrontations that would harm our links with the Jews.

Despite the fact we are dealing here with an open and intelligent person who as a military man stood out for his intellectual integrity, it is clear that Ayalon is at the beginning of his way in an organization that is totally new for him. Were it not for Rabin's assassination, Karmi Gilon stood good chances of becoming one of the best Shin Bet chiefs for such an era. His abrupt departure requires of Ayalon, who has come from the outside, to start grooming the new Shin Bet leadership. This in itself is not an easy mission and will probably take several years to accomplish.

Israel: Labor, Likud Primaries Scheduled for 25, 26 Mar

TA2202125396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Likud primaries will take place on 26 March, as originally decided. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that at one stage it was resolved to bring forward the election of Knesset candidates because of the decision to hold early Knesset elections. However, due to the expense of changing the date, it was decided to go back to the original date, 26 March. That means that the primaries in the two major parties will be held on consecutive days. Labor's primaries will take place on 25 March.

Israel: Sarid Elected Meretz Head, Comments on Palestinian State

TA2202194496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This evening Meretz elected Minister Yosi Sarid as its head, in place of Shulamit Aloni. Most of the Meretz council members supported Sarid's election. Following his election Minister Sarid

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called on Shulamit Aloni to continue to be active in the framework of Meretz. He said that nobody in the movement compares to Aloni as far as contribution and credit go. Appealing to Nabil Sha'th, who was also present in the meeting hall, Sarid declared that the Palestinian state has emerged in fact. He expressed the wish that in the future, when Sha'th comes to a Meretz convention, he will come as the official representative of the independent Palestinian state. Following the speech Yosi Sarid received a handshake from Shulamit Aloni.

Israel: Attorney General — No Proceedings Against Ben-Eli'ezer

TA2202175496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Attorney General Mikha'el Ben-Ya'ir has decided not to open legal proceedings against Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, but has leveled strong criticism against the minister. The announcement follows an investigation into a suspicion raised by the state comptroller's report that Ben-Eli'ezer transferred public funds to the Labor Party and Arab communities which promised to support Labor candidates for local elections. The attorney general said the minister deviated sharply from proper practices, but he could not be charged with breaking the law.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 22 February adds: "In reaction to the attorney general's decision, Minister Ben-Eli'ezer emphasized that all the money transfers were funded by the Finance Ministry. He told our correspondent Pe'erli Shahar that since the state comptroller's report was published, his ministry has stopped funneling the funds."]

Israel: NEQUDA Review for Jan

TA2002133196

[FBIS Report] The following is a review of the January issue of NEQUDA, the monthly Hebrew-language magazine published by the Society for the Advancement of Settlement and Absorption in Judaea, Samaria, the Gaza Strip, and the Jordan Valley, which serves as the political organ of the Jewish settlers in the territories. These reports include summaries of all articles, reports, interviews, commentaries, and other items with a bearing on political affairs published in NEQUDA.

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1. Opening Page
2. News Section
3. Mr. Bribe
4. They Are Destroying the Economy
5. Have I Lost You, Friend?
6. Not To Recognize Them

OPENING PAGE:

This 300-word column appearing on page 3 and signed by Editor in Chief Uri Elitzur is entitled "Bypass Surgery." Recounting his experience driving on the Ramallah bypass road, Elitzur notes the scarcity of Arab settlements around Palestinian "population centers" as opposed to the numerous Jewish settlements that straddle the broad highway. Elitzur writes that "perhaps, by some reverse logic, we needed this left-wing government in order to break new ground and build roads in which the Likud government was afraid to invest the necessary millions because of its fear of Peace Now demonstrations."

FROM THE NEWS SECTION:

1. On numerous occasions, Palestinian policemen have violated the Oslo agreement by detaining Israeli drivers and confiscating their weapons.

2. First right-wing demonstration in Zion Square since Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's assassination to be held on 20 January, the date of the Palestinian elections.

3. Palestinian authorities engaged in creeping annexation of "white areas," which are supposed to remain under Israeli control.

4. Shamgar Commission of Inquiry into Rabin assassination seeks 'Arutz 7 assistance in locating witness.

5. Government ignoring repeated violations of Oslo agreements by Palestinian Authority.

6. Palestinian Authority issued Palestine stamp in violation of Oslo agreements.

7. Head of Efrat council reports cooperation on municipal level with mukhtars of nearby Arab villages.

8. Council of Jewish settlement in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza Strip to help right wing in elections.

9. Elqana settler suing YEDI'OT AHARONOT for claiming settlers proposed to sell their homes to Palestinians.

10. Unnamed military sources quoted as stating that 'Arafat used his Egyptian-supplied helicopters to smuggle wanted men from Egypt to the Gaza Strip.

11. Head of contractors association says government not renewing licenses of foreign workers in order to guarantee Palestinians jobs.

12. Palestinians who owe Israelis money have disappeared inside autonomous areas.

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13. NRP [National Religious Party] Knesset Member Sha'ul Yahalom protests that IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers are ordered to carry out "political activities" on the Jewish sabbath to prevent right-wing protests.

14. Relatives of three border policemen claim they were deliberately run over by an Arab.

MR. BRIBE

This 2,300-word article on pages 18, 19, 20, and 21 by Yehoshu'a Mor-Yosef accuses the Labor government of manipulating the state budget in order to curry favor with the media and various sectors of the public. The report says that "a close look at next year's state budget, as proposed by the government, reveals it to be an election year budget, containing ploys rivaling the good old days of MAPAI [Party of Eretz Yisra'el Workers, a Labor Party precursor]."

Mor-Yosef goes on to enumerate a series of "new clauses" in the state budget proposal, encompassing fields as diverse as the media; government factories; the environment; the Construction and Housing Ministry; the Israel Lands Administration; and the Education, Religious, and Interior Ministries. Construction and Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer is accused of offering "to transfer another $750 million over the coming year to the Palestinian Authority [PA] in the framework of an outrageous political deal. Ben-Eli'ezer fears that terrorist attacks inside the Green Line will cause the Labor Party, under Peres, to lose the elections. That is why he is offering 'Arafat $250 million in exchange for a prolonged closure on the autonomous areas." In conclusion, Mor-Yosef cautions that "all this money" will come at the expense of economic growth and new jobs and will plunge Israel into debt.

THEY ARE DESTROYING THE ECONOMY

This 2,000 word article on pages 22, 23, 24, and 25 by Dr. Yitzhaq Klein, a resident of Ma'ale Adumim who lectures at Bar Ilan University's Faculty of Political Science, analyzes the state of the Israeli economy and concludes that the Labor government has been ruining the economy since 1992 by "increasing its expenditures each year," "thus creating a false sense of 'affluence'." This has led to large deficits in the state budget and in the balance of payments, as well as to a drop in the level of public savings.

HAVE I LOST YOU, FRIEND?

This 1,200-word article by Elyaqim Ha'etzni on pages 36 and 37 is an open letter to Uri Elitzur in reaction to the latter's column which appeared in the last issue. Ha'etzni rejects Elitzur's argument that the PA be accepted as "a fact" and his call to "adapt to the new conditions." Ha'etzni lists numerous violations of the Oslo agreements by the PA and, alluding to the marriage metaphor from Elitzur's article, asks: "What should the parents do when their fears prove true and the bridegroom is really a gangster and a criminal? Should they abandon their daughter to him just in order to avoid canceling the wedding?" Asserting that the Oslo process is not irreversible, Ha'etzni urges Elitzur to "rethink his positions," cautioning: "You will have to decide each day anew whether to stop the Oslo process and expose this false peace or to continue, thus putting off the war, while knowing that it will ultimately exact an even higher toll in blood."

NOT TO RECOGNIZE THEM

This 1,400-article by Rabbi Eliyahu Zayni, a rabbi from Haifa who is also a mathematics lecturer, was also written in reaction to Uri Elitzur's column. Zayni starts off by saying that the Jewish residents of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip have been employing Palestinians and trading with them since 1967. Thus, Elitzur's call to speak to them directly constitutes nothing new. "However," Zayni asserts, if Elitzur was "referring to the institutionalized level, which his statements seem to imply, then this is tantamount to a complete spiritual collapse." Zayni says that the worst thing about the Oslo agreements is not the handing over of Jewish land, although this is bad enough, but rather "its recognition that an organization of murderers has the same rights as a law-abiding state founded on faith, justice, and honesty." Zayni asserts that from the aspect of faith, "recognizing the PLO as an interlocutor is the same as granting such recognition to Am'alek [Israel's implacable enemy from biblical times]." Zayni castigates the Labor government for granting legitimacy to a gang of "interlopers" who wish to destroy Israel and vows that "we will never recognize evil and injustice as a source for legal or moral rights." Zayni concludes by saying: "We will not recognize the terrorists or their sovereignty over parts of our land. We will not recognize their terrorist army. We will not recognize the term 'Palestinians.' We will not recognize their titles of 'generals,' 'security personnel,' and so forth. Only people totally devoid of sensitivity and any other human values could use such noble terms employed by principled countries when describing a bunch of murderers who kill women and children."

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Israel: Shohat Vows Not To Devaluate Shekel, Displeased With Rate

TA2202125196 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 22 Feb 96 p 11

[Report by economic correspondent Gad Li'or]

[FBIS Translated Text] Finance Minister Avraham Shohat yesterday expressed his displeasure with the fact that the U.S. dollar exchange rate is so low — below 3.10 new Israeli shekels to the dollar (3.0970 yesterday). He noted that steps must be taken to improve the rate, but promised that he will in no way carry out a one-time devaluation of the shekel.

Senior Finance Ministry sources said yesterday that, although the exchange rate is not realistic, there will be no devaluation. They expressed surprise at the fact that the Bank of Israel is not taking the necessary steps — cutting down interest rates and massively intervening in the foreign currency exchange market — to implement a gradual devaluation of the shekel against the foreign currencies.

The finance minister and the governor of the Bank of Israel yesterday held their weekly meeting and discussed the exchange rate, among other things. According to the finance minister, the exchange rate should be corrected to prevent "economic imbalance here."

Senior economic elements believe, however, that due to the grave deficit in the balance of payments, there will be a need to carry out a devaluation immediately after the Knesset elections are held and a new government is established.

Israel: Arrow Deviation From Course Causes Concern

TA2202141396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Feb 96 p A1

[Report by Sharon Sade]

[FBIS Translated Text] The operational Arrow missile tested two days ago deviated from its course seconds after being launched over the sea. The test's directors considered blowing up the missile, but the Air Force security officer, a colonel, who was supervising the test, decided to continue the flight when it turned out that the missile was stabilizing. The deviation was within the permissible limits set for the test.

During the test, minor software glitches turned up in the "Oren Yaroq" [Green Pine] radar system, which was passively involved in the test by tracking the missile. Security sources say that in any complicated development plan, faults naturally crop up; the aim of such tests is to discover them and find immediate solutions.

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Lebanon: Defense Minister—People To Continue To Resist 'Occupation'

NC2202195796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has stated that the escalation of the Zionist aggression against our kinsmen in the south and western al-Biqa' is part of Israel's hostile policy that is forever seeking to destroy the infrastructure, uproot our steadfast people, and force them to leave.

Commenting on the Israeli raids, he said today: This barbaric action will not frighten our kinsmen but will make them more determined to confront the Israeli death machine. Our people will continue to resist the occupation without paying the least attention to the enemy leaders' statements that aim to create a chasm between the Resistance and the people and the Resistance and the state. The enemy's guns, planes, and warships will not deter our people from demanding the unconditional and complete Israeli withdrawal from our territories and the implementation of the UN resolutions, foremost among them Resolution 425.

Lebanon: Nasrallah Proposes Prisoner Exchange, Handover of Bodies

NC2302130196 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 1235 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah has launched a new initiative calling for the exchange of prisoners and detainees between Hizballah and the occupation forces and their agents.

The initiative was announced by Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah at a news conference at the al-Imam al-Khomeyni Center in Harat Hurayk at noon today. He noted Hizballah's readiness to release Lahdist [South Lebanese Army, SLA] prisoners in return for all the hostages held in the al-Khiyam Prison.

His eminence also proposed the handover of the bodies of two Zionist soldiers in return for the release of all the hostages held in the enemy's jails.

Nasrallah distinguished between the detainees and prisoners held by Hizballah and those held by the enemy and his Agents.

Lebanon: Nasrallah News Conference on Prisoner Initiative

NC2302071096 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Further to Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah's initiative on the first day of 'Id al-Fitr regarding the release of three Lahdist [South Lebanese Army, SLA] Agents; out of concern for the humanitarian suffering of the prisoners and detainees in the occupation and Agents' prisons; and pursuing efforts to address this major humanitarian issue, Hizballah's Central Information Unit invites local and international newspapers and news agencies to attend a news conference by the Hizballah secretary general at 1100 [0900 GMT] today in the Central Information Unit premises in Harat Hurayk [Beirut's Southern Suburb].

During the news conference the secretary general will launch a new initiative to resolve this issue.

Lebanon: SLA's Lahd Reacts to Government's Decision on Trial

NC2202170896 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a news conference in Marj 'Uyun at 0900 today, Staff General Antoine Lahd, commander of the South Lebanese Army [SLA], placed the Lebanese state on the defense stand for abandoning the border region and handing it over to strangers since 1967. He stressed: The SLA and the sons of the region are determined to continue their national task of defending this land, until Lebanon becomes a strong country capable of shouldering its missions and until it recognizes our rights and reaches an understanding with us.

General Lahd added: After the clamor created by the defense minister's decision to refer me, along with 89 veteran military men who served for a while or are still serving with the SLA, to the military court on fabricated charges, I find it necessary to explain some points. I am not doing this to defend us — because we do not need a defense — but to clarify a situation they want to distort and to serve a fact they seek to forge. He went on: I wonder if the state has forgotten, or is pretending to forget, that it abandoned the south in 1967. It was practically absent from the south; it relinquished its sovereignty over it and its duty to defend it in favor of armed groups that falsely claimed resistance but only brought death and destruction to the south. By abandoning them, the state forced southerners to bear arms and organize their ranks to defend themselves, their freedom, dignity, and means of living.

General Lahd added: Has the state, which is today pursuing these military men, forgotten that it encouraged them at the beginning and continued to send them their full salaries and dues until 1979, often via Haifa [port in Israel] because roads between Beirut and the border region were under the control of the Palestinian organizations? How, then, can the state today discredit

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them and bring them to trial under the pretext of dealing with Israel, when it itself was a pioneer in such dealings under the pressure of circumstances?

General Lahd continued: Everyone in Lebanon, except for us here, is unable to speak his mind and is frightened to confront the arrogance of the despots. We will not kneel to any intimidation or pressure, and will never accept life unless free and with high heads. He added: The state's attempts to humiliate us and harm our morale are doomed to failure. The state knows full well that it cannot enter this region by force. It abandoned this region long ago because it is a worn-out state; it colluded with those who had ambitions in this region in the past or those who are still having ambitions in it today. The state has to reach an understanding with us and recognize our rights. Otherwise, we will be living in two different worlds.

General Lahd went on: So far, we have respected the state and safeguarded its institutions. If we opposed some of its practices or inclinations, we did that out of our concern for the national interest and for the interest and fate of this region. We do not accept the border region to be other than an integrated part of Lebanon and feel that it must be dealt with accordingly. We never encroached upon or slandered any of the state officials personally, and we hope that they will not embarrass us and force us to disclose the background and history of some of this state's figures. Finally, let them remember the saying: Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Lebanon: Article Warns Government Against Banning Demonstrations

NC2302115596 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 14 Feb 96 p 1

[Article by Charle Ayyub: "You Shall Be Held Responsible for the Workers' Blood"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The government has threatened to ban demonstrations and has placed all its security organs on alert to thwart the Labor Federation's actions. We fear that a rule of domination and hegemony is coming, and that some people will use their official status to further their own ends and suppress any labor or popular unrest that bothers the country's officials.

Interior Minister Michel al-Murr returned from Damascus and loudly proclaimed that demonstrations are banned and that the government is ready to suppress any move the Labor Federation might make in Beirut.

This has been accompanied by a government campaign accusing the Labor Federation of implementing a foreign conspiracy against the country's stability and security. Before making new accusations against the workers, government sources always speak about the Lebanese-Syrian alliance in order to give the impression that the government's decisions against the workers enjoy Syrian backing.

To begin with, we know the Syrian stance very well. It is strategic and firm and comes from President Hafiz al-Asad's strategy, which we know very well and in which we have faith. This strategy does not call for starving the Lebanese people, nor does it support the powers that be that are against the Labor Federation and the unions. Syria has never backed a policy that disregards the demands of factory owners and workers. There has been enough profit-seeking from the Syrian position subjecting national strategy to the whims and interests of the government or highly influential people.

Al-Asad's Syria supports Lebanon's independence and its institutions. In the last 20 years when the Lebanese state was fragmented, we never heard that Syria wanted to annex any of its territory nor did it make a proposal to unite the two countries. On the contrary, al-Asad's Syria always sought to unite Lebanon, preserve its institutions, and hold a presidential election as a prelude to the revival of the state's institutions. Syria did not do this so that some official — whether it be the prime minister, an interior minister, or any other minister — might exploit it for the sake of the government's benefit, even if this adversely affected the way the Lebanese people view Syria.

Perhaps the Lebanese officials are convinced that [Labor Federation Chairman] Ilyas Abu-Rizq meets daily with 'Arafat and Peres and leads the 'Arafatist-Israeli onslaught against Lebanon. Perhaps they believe that Labor Federation Secretary General Yasir Ni'mah is the architect of the Israeli-Palestinian Oslo Agreement. Perhaps they believe that it was the Committee for the Follow-up of Audiovisual Media that arranged the Wadi al-'Arabah peace agreement [between Jordan and Israel] and that Lebanese workers and strugglers were behind the Camp David Accords. If all this is so, then the government's officials must put the workers and their federation on trial and jail all the treasonous poor.

All the hungry, the dirt poor, and the factory owners are traitors in the government's eyes because they are demanding a higher standard of living and a reasonable increase in wages. This bothers the government, which seems to think that their demands harm the country's supreme pan-Arab and national interests. The government believes the furthering of the nation's interests can only be done by crushing the workers and the poor.

Perhaps we are living under a monarchy or under the yoke of a brutal capitalism that seeks only its

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own interest, namely, the domination of the poor vast majority by the very few rich.

How long will the officials profit from their relations with Syria? How long will they continue to exploit the honorable pan-Arab stance of al-Asad's Syria to serve the objectives of those who operate in the back alleys of Lebanese politics?

Al-Asad's Syria has always been on the side of all Lebanese people, never siding with one sector against another. Syria is not a political party that seeks benefit in Lebanon but is the true backer of all Lebanon and the impregnable shield against the conspiracies of partition, resettlement, and Israeli hegemony.

The workers will go out into the streets on 29 February, backed by federations and unions, to declare the policies of starvation and squandering of treasury funds must stop and that the special funds established by the government for almost every ministry and every politician must be abolished. They are the major drain on the Lebanese people's resources.

Before Minister Michel al-Murr speaks about suppressing the demonstrations, he must tell us how he plans to solve the choking traffic jams. Perhaps he can tell us why the Lebanese citizens must spend their day on the roads because the Interior Ministry has done next to nothing to solve the congestion.

Before you threaten to suppress the demonstrations, we wish to tell you that oppression forces the people to go out into the streets. The public exploitation of power to amass private wealth and the reckless flaunting of this wealth with lavish banquets forces the people to demonstrate.

The minister for refugee affairs has a fund of 753 billion pounds to spend according to his own and al-Hariri's whims. The Chamber of Deputies speaker has a fund for the Council of the South to use for his own electoral benefit. Treasury funds are recklessly squandered. In view of this, when we witness an absence of social and economic planning to improve the living conditions of factory owners and workers, we call for demonstrations. We declare that it is every citizen's and every deputy's duty to demonstrate, and that 29 February will be a day of confrontation between a nation demanding its rights and a policy of negligence, highhandedness, and starvation.

Moreover, what about public liberties? What about the leading politicians' and ministers' control of television and radio stations and other media by illegal means? What about the repression of freedoms, silencing the people and preventing their self-expression, and letting capital control every little thing in the country? Does this mean that the people will not remain silent and will certainly go out into the streets to demand their rights especially as they see their ministers making fortunes at the expense of their sweat and toil?

There is one conspiracy in Lebanon. It is not a foreign plot but a consequence of irresponsible government, the squandering of the treasury through the establishment of special funds, spending money on unproductive projects, and the domination of public investments by private investments. All this is done under the aegis of a mafia government that exploits power and money to dominate the Lebanese people.

This is the conspiracy, honorable officials. The group of reckless officials will be held responsible for every drop of workers' blood to be shed in Beirut's streets.

Lebanon: Israeli Gunboats Stop, Search Ship off Southern Coast

NC2202145796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Reports from the south indicate that Israeli gunboats cruising off the [Lebanese] territorial waters as part of a naval blockade against the southern coasts impounded the Lebanese-flagged commercial ship "Mondial Roro" this morning. The ship, with a cargo of cars, was coming from Belgium. It was stopped off al-Kharab coast near Tyre, searched for 30 minutes, and then released.

Elsewhere, security reports stressed that agent Lahd militias [South Lebanese Army] have closed the crossings between the liberated and the occupied areas for the third day running.

Lebanon: Israeli Air Raids in South Reported

NC2202205296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli warplanes raided the Iqlim al-Tuffah hills, especially the hills of Mlita and Jabal Safi, at 2100 today. The planes fired several air-to-surface missiles. Fifteen minutes later, the planes launched a second raid against the same region. The Israeli warplanes are still flying at a low altitude over Iqlim al-Tuffah, drawing the antiaircraft fire of the Lebanese Army and the Resistance.

Lebanon: 'Resistance' Foils Israeli Advance

NC2302073396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Extreme caution prevails in the south following Israeli attacks on villages in the central

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and western sectors, including Iqlim al-Tuffah, yesterday. Israeli warplanes staged successive air strikes on al-Jabal al-Rafi', Mlita, Luwayzah, Jabal Safi, Jarju', 'Ayn Bu Siwar, Mazra'at al-Hamra', and Arnun. The raiding warplanes drew anti-aircraft fire from the Lebanese Army.

Elsewhere, enemy ground forces opened artillery fire on villages in Tyre, al-Nabatiyah, and Western al-Biqa'. The Resistance retaliated with a series of operations. Reports said Israeli forces are reinforcing positions inside the occupied strip.

This morning the Amal Movement announced that its fighters foiled an Israeli advance toward al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa and that clashes ensued involving various types of weapons. The Resistance fighters forced the enemy troops to retreat after suffering losses in personnel and equipment. During the Israeli force's withdrawal the enemy artillery bombarded the surrounding areas.

The enemy closed the crossing points of Kafr Tibnit, al-Hamra', and al-Bayyadah between the liberated area and the occupied strip.

Enemy naval forces continue their siege of the southern coast. Enemy gunboats yesterday impounded a ship with a cargo of cars coming from Belgium. The ship was released after it was searched.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Taleban Rocket Attack on Kabul Reported

LD2202151296 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban again today [22 February] fired rockets into Kabul city. BAKHTAR reports that today Benazir Bhutto's Taleban fired [word indistinct] rockets into residential areas of Kabul, injuring two Kabul residents. With no respect for Id al-Fitr, the Taleban are continuing to fire rockets. On the first day of Id they fired 18 rockets, as a result of which five Kabul residents were martyred.

According to another report, a Taleban jet plane appeared in Kabul airspace this morning, but was chased away by fighter planes of the Islamic state.

Afghanistan: Taleban Aircraft Active Over Kabul

LD2202224696 Tehran IRNA in English 2220 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb. 22, IRNA — Jetfighters of the Taleban militia violated the air space of Kabul on Thursday but were forced to retreat by the anti-aircraft fire of the Afghan government. The Taleban's breach of air space followed the sorties flown recently by the government's air force.

Government fighters over the past two days heavily bombarded Taleban positions at the southern and south-western outskirts of Kabul at least eight times. Afghanistan's government sources claimed that during their air raids heavy casualties were inflicted on the Taleban, resulting in the destruction of 70 percent of the militia's war machine.

The heavy ground attacks accompanied by vast propaganda launched by Taleban forces on Tuesday on the outskirts of Kabul failed to achieve any positive results, and were crushed by the government forces and their allies. Meanwhile, the Taleban lobbed 5 rockets on Kabul's central areas on thursday, resulting in the injury of several civilians.

Afghanistan: Government Launches Counterattack Against Taleban

LD2202144396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman said yesterday: After the Taleban attack on the south of Kabul, government forces are making preparations for a large counterattack. The spokesman said the Taleban forces attacked Kabul while the people of Kabul were marking Id al-Fitr and bombarded residential and civilian areas of Kabul. As a result, at least four civilians were killed and a number of others were injured. The Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman concluded: In retaliation for Taleban's recent attack, government warplanes bombed their positions 8 km south of Kabul. No report has been received about loss of life or casualties.

India

India: Charges Filed Against 14 More Politicians

BK2202125096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1135 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Corrected version of BK2202122096; changing number of politicians charged from 40 to 14 in headline and in first paragraph]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] has filed charge sheets against 14 more politicians in a designated court this afternoon in the hawala [illegal money transfer] case. The Supreme Court was informed that the permission is being sought from the president to charge sheet Delhi chief minister, Mr. Madan Lal Khurana, for allegedly receiving hawala money.

The leaders against whom charge sheets have been filed are the former union ministers — Mr. R.K. Dhawan, Mr. Kamal Nath, Mr. Bhuta Singh, and Mr. Arvind Netam. All these leaders have resigned from the union Council of Ministers in the last three days. The other leaders who are from union ministers are Mr. Harmohan Dhawan, Mr. A.K. Sen, Mr. Natwar Singh, and Mr. Jaffar Sharief. The leader of the breakaway Congress, Mr. N.D. Tiwari and the senior Janata Dal leader, Mr. Sharad Yadav, are also among those against whom charge sheets have been filed. Other leaders are Mr. B.D. Thagne, Mr. L.P. Shahi, and Mr. Ranjit Singh.

Giving the resumption of the hawala case, the solicitor general, Mr. Dipankar Gupta, told the apex court comprising Mr. Justice G.S. Verma, Mr. Justice F.B. Barucha, and Mr. Justice S.C. Sen that 115 (?entries) having names of the recipients of hawala money have been found in the diaries of the prime accused, S.K. Jain. He said: Out of that, 24 have been charge sheeted, six have died, and eight remain unidentified or not fully identified. In case of the Delhi chief minister, the permission is awaited.

The Delhi chief minister, Mr. Madan Lal Khurana, has sent in his resignation to the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] party high command after the CBI sought permission to prosecute him in the Jain hawala case. The party is expected to take a decision on the resignation shortly.

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India: Delhi Chief Minister Resigns; More Details on Money Scandal

BK2202164196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Delhi chief minister, Mr. Madan Lal Khurana, has resigned in the wake of the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] seeking permission from the president to prosecute him in the multicrore hawala [illegal money transfer] case. In a letter to the lieutenant governor, Mr. Khurana said it is not proper for him to continue in office in the circumstances. Mr. Khurana, however, said the allegations leveled against him are baseless and politically motivated. Meanwhile, the ruling BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] legislature party meeting has been convened in New Delhi tomorrow to find a successor to Mr. Khurana. Earlier, the lieutenant governor, Mr. P.K. Dave, forwarded the resignation letter of Mr. Khurana to the president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, for acceptance. With this, Mr. Khurana's 26-month's tenure at the head of the BJP government in the national capital comes to an end.

The CBI filed charge sheets against 14 more politicians in the hawala case in the designated court today. [passage omitted]

The solicitor general, Mr. Dipankar Gupta, told the court that 115 entries having names of the recipients of hawala money have been found in the diaries of the prime accused, S.K. Jain, in 1991. He said the list includes 62 politicians, 23 officials, and 24 are grouped as personnel, while six are unclassified. He said 24 have been charge sheeted, six have died, and eight remained unidentified or not fully identified. He also disclosed that two names have come up as recipients of illegal money; however, he did not disclose the names. The court was informed by the CBI that it has not found sufficient evidence against 23 names, including two which came up during investigations. Mr. Gupta said efforts will be made to gather more proof against them; however, the CBI does not propose to prosecute them at present. Mr. Gupta refuted charges of delay in the case leveled in some quarters. He said more evidence has been found in a computer disk on FERA [Foreign Exchange Regulation Act] violations this year.

In a brief order, the apex court directed that matters pertaining to the hawala case cannot be entertained by any other court. The bench also directed that the original documents along with Xerox copies and the floppies be transferred to trial court of special judge Mr. B.B. Gupta. The court said that any person wanting to bring any material for consideration in the case should approach the amicus curiae Mr. Anil Dewan. The next hearing has been fixed for the 1st of next month.

Meanwhile, the special judge, Mr. B.B. Gupta has rejected the bail application of the former chairman of the Neyveli Lignite Corporation, Mr. M.P. Narayanan, and two officials of the corporation. He ordered for their judicial custody till the 1st of next month for their alleged role in the hawala case. The CBI alleged that the accused, while working in the public sector Neyveli Lignite Corporation, manipulated in favor of M.K. Jain, the contractor of water pipe package of the second thermal power station. The court also issued fresh nonbailable warrants against two more officials of the corporation.

The Congress-I has ruled out any reshuffle in the union Council of Ministers following the resignations of several ministers in the hawala case. The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told newspersons in New Delhi that there is no need for a cabinet reshuffle. He said the CBI's action will convince the people that the government is sincere and serious about tackling corruption. Mr. Gadgil indicated that there is no plan to convene a meeting of the party working committee in the near future as demanded by some senior leaders to discuss the hawala issue. He said the CWC [Congress Working Committee] will have to meet before the Lok Sabha polls to approve the party's election manifesto.

India: Article Views CIA Report on 'Fragmentation' of Nation

BK2302024896 Delhi NAVBHARAT TIMES in Hindi 21 Feb 96 p 6

[Article by Prabha Dikshit]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Acting on orders from the U.S. Vice President Albert Gore, the U.S. spy agency, the CIA, prepared a list of sixteen countries that are likely to break up in the future. This exercise was undertaken to help U.S. policy-makers see what their options are. India is on this list. India was included on the list because it is a poor democratic country. The CIA report claims that a poor democratic country is more prone to fragmentation.

It is not the first time that the CIA has expressed its discomfiture regarding India's solidarity. The process began the day the British left India. When the British departed they realized they were leaving a failure behind them. Pakistan had already been created, but any thoughts of further dividing the country into Dravidistan, Sikhistan, and Nagaland were left unfulfilled. The need to wash this slur of failure off the British was taken over by the United States, much in the same way that it had accepted other imperialistic responsibilities of the British crown. The unfounded warning that India is going to fall apart is not so much based in reality,

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as it is an attempt by the CIA to find a facade behind which to unleash its well-planned conspiracy against India's solidarity. The CIA regularly indulges in this game of prediction concerning countries it wants divided. It comes up with well- documented records to announce the fragmentation of a specific country thereby giving the U.S. Administration a basis for its dealings in international politics. The latest prediction made by the CIA is just such a move.

U.S. policy towards India follows the pattern created by the British Imperialists. If the British favored the Muslim League, the U.S. Administration would favor Pakistan. The sabotaging tactics adopted by the United States to cause India's fragmentation from within are also not new either. Like the erstwhile British Raj, the United States has also some chosen intellectuals and scholars who have been trained by notorious institutes — such as the CIA Heritage Foundation, which is devoted to the 'Break India' campaign. Their job is to create a condition either by fabricating stories or by launching massive disinformation drives to expedite the fragmentation of India. These 'think tanks' use religion, culture, and politics as their 'research work.' When they cannot use religion as a tool to generate secessionist tendencies in India, they employ cultural differences to create schisms. Behind the facade of their research they magnify any tiny crevice that may or may not exist in Indian society and blows it up to massive proportions; in their efforts they form a basis for secessionist ideologies to grow. In their attempt to cultivate secessionism on Indian soil they found Punjab and the southern region of India to be most fertile. This was because these areas had already been ploughed by erstwhile 'British scholars.' Hence they found these grounds were prepared to grant them success. [passage omitted]

Drunk from the wine of its unassailable power, the U.S. Administration and its spy agencies have lost their capacity to see reality clearly. There is no country in the world that is as backward and unadvanced as it was 50 years ago. The CIA and its master — the U.S. Administration — face continuous failures in predicting the future of other countries. The U.S. Administration attempted to act as a policeman in Somalia, but U.S. troops made a hasty retreat significantly highlighting this point. The defiant stance of the black people and their indomitable combative spirit made U.S. troops turn tail and run.

It is high time that the United States realizes it will never be able to break the nation whose emergence the British could not check despite valiant efforts. Notwithstanding the conspiracies it will continue to hatch, the U.S. Administration shall never be able to divide India. It is no longer the India of 1947. Today people of from different provinces intermingle with one another, creating a sound base of unit and solidarity, which is the ultimate fount of any nation's strength.

Instead of wasting their time and energy on hypothetical questions such as whether India will stand united or divided, it would be better if U.S. intellectuals contemplate the question recently raised by Mr. Byrski, the Polish ambassador to India, in a seminar: How does India, despite being the same size as Europe and sharing its myriad diversities, remain united? No one at the seminar could give a convincing answer to this question. If the CIA is able to do so, not only Mr. Byrski, but all Indians, would be extremely grateful to hear it. If the CIA fails to come up with a response, our request is akin to what Mahatma Gandhi said to Churchill: "Please leave India to the mercy of the Almighty."

India: Mukherjee Welcomes U.S. Move To Block Pakistan Arms Supply

BK2202160996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The external affairs minister has welcomed the U.S. President's reported move to block the delivery of arms worth $368 million to Pakistan under the Brown Amendment. Talking to our Chandigarh correspondent this morning, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee said it will be more appropriate if Washington altogether stops its arms supplies to Islamabad. Mr. Mukherjee described the recent firing by Pakistani troops at some places at the border as unfortunate and uncalled for.

India: China Supports Nation's Nuclear Disarmament Stand

BK2302063296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] China has supported India for its call to link the ban on nuclear tests with disarmament. In an interview to a newspaper in Geneva, a senior Chinese disarmament negotiator, Mr. Zhao Zukang, welcomed as reasonable and logical India's stand that the ultimate goal should be the elimination of all nuclear weapons in a timeframe. He added that Beijing had earlier backed calls by the nonaligned groups of countries and the United Nations for negotiations on global disarmament. Mr. Zhao Zukang criticized the United States for what he called Washington's attempts to negotiate a test ban treaty on its terms and according to its own timetable.

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India: Article Views 'Vacillation' in Missile Policy

BK2302110396 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 22 Feb 96 p 8

[Article by Brahma Chellaney: "India's Missile Policy; Wages of Vacillation"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE United States acknowledged recently that it is selling ATACMs, or advanced tactical missiles, to Turkey to safeguard its security from "the very real missile threat from other countries in the region such as Iraq and Iran". The State Department, however, did not care to explain how Iraq, with its Scud inventories dismantled by UNSCOM [UN Special Commission], still poses a threat or how Iran's short-range missiles could reach Turkey.

Shortly thereafter, Washington issued two consecutive statements chiding India for test-firing an indigenous tactical missile system and declaring that the "acquisition of this kind of technology is not a good idea". The public reprimands to the country that is home to one-sixth of the global population did not make any mention on the "very real" threats it faces, not from some feigned capabilities, but from an array of the most lethal missile deployments in its neighbourhood.

India has consciously avoided taking any provocative or escalatory action even in the face of missile transfers in its neighbourhood, the development of new mobile missile systems and the testing of nuclear warheads barely 1,000 kilometres from its borders. It remains the only major country in the world without missile defences and the protection of a nuclear arsenal or nuclear umbrella.

India's exceptional self-restraint can also be seen from the fact that it is the only country in history to demonstrate its capabilities to build nuclear weapons and medium-range ballistic missiles and then withhold weaponisation despite pressing security concerns.

So how does the country with the most advanced and formidable missile and nuclear armouries consider it fit to lecture and chastise a nation as self-restrained as India? After all, this is the very power which in 1971, in the words of President Richard Nixon 14 years later, "considered using nuclear weapons" to prevent Indian forces from decimating West Pakistan, and which has consistently turned a blind eye to the requirements of its own national laws with regard to Chinese missile and nuclear transfers to Pakistan. The answer is that the US perceives India as a soft state whose policies and programmes can be influenced through high-pressure or coercive diplomacy.

This has been underscored by India's official reaction to the US admonishment that by test-launching the 250 km-range Prithvi it committed a "mistake". After several days of government silence, Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee gave an interview to a wire service in which he expressed no regret or protest over the new level of brashness in US public diplomacy towards India. Instead, he bashfully asserted that "there is no question of abandoning the Prithvi programme". Pusillanimity in policy and diplomacy begets more external pressure. The latest US censure followed the American-inspired G-7 demarche submitted by Canada which warned India against deploying the Prithvi.

India's key strategic programmes were initiated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and pursued with determination by her son and successor, Rajiv Gandhi. Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao has not introduced a single new major strategic project. Rather, his passivity and indecision on critical national security issues has upset the time tables for completing the earlier projects and the launch of successor programmes.

The 150 km-range Prithvi model and the intermediate-range Agni had already been successfully test-fired before Rajiv Gandhi left office in 1989. As Mr Rao finishes his five year term, the Prithvi programme has still not been completed and the Agni has been kept in limbo. Prolonged political foot- dragging on the available options for missile defences has blunted some of the accomplishments of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP), which by testing several different missile systems in its first seven years showed itself as one of the most successful strategic programmes in the world.

The Prithvi, as a short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) designed to be a second-strike tool of conventional deterrence, is one of the least significant of the systems developed by IGMDP because it cannot counter most missile threats faced by India. With its long tail and cumbersome liquid-fuel loading, the Prithvi can only be a precursor to more advanced, solid-fuelled SRBMs. This is in spite of the fact that the two Prithvi models, with their on-board computer systems, are among the world's most accurate SRBMs and their flight trajectory can be controlled by the ground crew almost up to the point of impact. The Government's political trepidation on an elementary system like the Prithvi is symptomatic of the wider and more serious debility in national security policy.

The January 27 Prithvi launch was the first since the test Mr Rao delayed until his return from a May 1994 US visit. That it took nearly 20 months for the Prime Minister to okay another Prithvi test, with the decision coming just three months before national elections, is indicative of the level of tenacity and determination

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with which this Government has sought to safeguard and strengthen India's defence options.

The latest test, of course, jolted the Americans who thought that despite the kick-in-the-teeth administered by the Brown amendment, the Rao Government would continue to kowtow to Washington. The Government, however, still publicly prevaricates on the Prithvi induction issue in an apparent effort to bail out the Clinton administration from its obligations under the 1990 US Missile Technology Control Act (MTCA). If the Government admits deploying the Prithvis, it would arouse a public reaction in Pakistan that would force Islamabad to uncrate the M-11s stashed at Sargodha. That would in turn leave Washington with no choice but to impose sweeping trade sanctions against China and Pakistan under MTCA.

Obviously, it suits India's interests if US sanctions are slapped on its two principal adversaries and their clandestine strategic dealings brought under intentional spotlight. But the Rao Government, eager not to embarrass the Clinton administration, declines to acknowledge that it has already inducted the first batches of the 150 km Prithvi's manufactured by Bharat Dynamics, which has a capacity to produce a small number of missiles every year. If the Government equivocates on a missile system inconsequential from a long-term strategic perspective, can it resolutely pursue the country's vital strategic programmes?

The Agni is testament to the Rao Government's willingness to undercut long-term national interests for short-term foreign policy benefits. With testing suspended for two years now, the intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) programme has been virtually consigned to policy oblivion as Mr Rao continues to tempo rise on the country's missile deterrent plans and baulk at taking a decision on utilising one of the available IRBM options. Almost seven years after the first Agni was built, India has still not begun to erect IRBM defences even as it becomes more vulnerable to increasingly sophisticated external missile deployments. By this time India should already have been looking beyond the Agni options to longer-range, solid-fuelled missiles.

While there are costs involved in taking any decision, Mr Rao does not seem to realise that pusillanimity and vacillation can exact a heavier toll on national security. When India already faces critical questions on its security, the costs of indecision should not be allowed to mount. Missile scientists need full political support to translate their achievements into operational capabilities, and the country cannot afford to continue to lose precious time. Having failed to throttle India's missile programme through sweeping technology controls, the US is now employing the tools of political pressure. The challenge for India is to blunt this pressure by doing what its security demands.

India: Haider, Iranian Official View Cooperation in Indian Ocean

LD2202162796 Tehran IRNA in English 1603 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New Delhi, Feb. 22, IRNA — India and Iran on Thursday discussed the ways and means of promoting cooperation among the Indian Ocean rim countries.

Abbas Maleki, the deputy Iranian foreign minister met Salman Haider, the foreign secretary of India, in New Delhi today.

The two sides stressed on the need of reviving multilateral cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.

They also discussed the role being played by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the expansion of cooperation among Indian Ocean countries.

The issue of Indo-Iran cooperation in Central Asia and Caucasia also figured during the meeting, with both the countries agreeing to effectively utilize in this regard technology at their disposal.

India and Iran also agreed to hold joint commission's meeting in the near future.

India: Pakistani Border Troops Resort to 'Unprovoked Heavy Firing'

BK2302091596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked heavy firing last night in Samba sector in Jammu and Kashmir. An official spokesman told our Jammu correspondent that the firing started at around 1930 in the evening from the Pakistani pickets of South Charwaha and continued for about two and half hours. BSF jawans [Border Security Force soldiers] returned the fire. No casualty was reported on the Indian side. Meanwhile, the state governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has directed the security agencies to maintain utmost vigil against terrorist activities. Addressing a high-level meeting in Srinagar convened to review the law and order situation, the governor said that with greater cooperation of the people, security forces are able to succeed in their efforts to contain militancy .

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Iran

Iran: Velayati Proposes Ending All Nuclear Testing

NC2302073996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] During the disarmament conference in Geneva yesterday, Foreign Minister Velayati called for ending all nuclear tests. Correspondent Kaviani, who is in Paris, interviewed Velayati on the telephone. Velayati commented on the Islamic Republic's proposal and its repercussions for the conference:

[Begin Velayati recording] The Islamic Republic's presentation of a specialized document at the conference on a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests was significant. No member of the Nonaligned Movement or Third World country has ever presented such a comprehensive and specialized proposal. Thus, immediately after my speech, seven countries from the various blocs—the West, the Nonaligned Movement, and Asian and Latin American countries—strongly and warmly defended our proposal. We had no disagreements at the meeting. This shows that the participating countries took our proposal, attached in writing to the speech, into consideration. The basis of our proposals was to collect the views of the influential countries at the disarmament conference. [end recording]

Our correspondent's report from Paris also states that last night French state radio carried a commentary on the conference on the nonproliferation of nuclear arms. It said: Iran's proposal was supported by the Nonaligned countries and Western diplomats in Geneva regard the proposal optimistically.

Iran: United States Compensates Country for Downed Airliner

LD2202183496 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As you know, in the month of Tir 1367 [3 July 1988] an Iran Air passenger plane, on a flight from Bandar-e 'Abbas to Dubai, was brought down by the USS Vincennes which was stationed in the region and 290 people on board the plane were martyred.

The head of the international legal department of the Islamic Republic of Iran today told our correspondent: Following the above- mentioned atrocity, the Islamic Republic of Iran's officials followed up the matter decisively; first through diplomatic channels, and then through a formal complaint to the UN Security Council. That was while America was refusing to pay any compensation to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Eftekhar Jahromi, [head of Iran's international legal department] said: The Islamic Republic of Iran then took its complaint to the ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization] council. The ICAO council found the United States of America guilty of violating the 1944 Convention. Jahromi added: The Islamic Republic of Iran then followed up the matter to restore its national rights in this case and took its complaint to the International Court at The Hague. America, first, objected to the Hague Court's jurisdiction, but eventually, as America found itself in an unsuitable legal position, it had to agree to make a payment of $131,800,000 to Iran.

The above-mentioned sum is for the aircraft which was downed, compensation for the victims, and a number of other banking claims.

The Americans were initially refusing to pay any compensation to Iran, but as complaints were raised and much legal effort made in presenting documented legal evidence, America had no choice but to pay compensation to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran: Further on U.S. Compensation for Downing of Passenger Plane

LD2202223996 Tehran IRNA in English 2216 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA — The U.S. has decided to pay compensation to Iran for its terrorist act of downing a Iranian passenger plane in 1988, following the indictment brought against Washington at the International Court of Justice.

Head of the Iranian office for international legal affairs, Eftekhar Jahromi told IRNA here on Thursday that the U.S. would pay a total of dlrs. 131.8 million, which amount includes dlrs. 40 million as compensation for the downed A-300 airbus, dlrs. 61.8 million as compensation to the families of victims, and dlrs. 30 million towards banking disputes.

On the procedure of the payment of compensation to the bereaved families, he said the sum determined will be deposited with a bank in Switzerland, and its withdrawal will be possible through the embassy of Switzerland in Tehran with the permission of the international legal service office on submission of relevant documents.

Jahromi said the legal heirs of the victims will be notified through the mass communication media on the procedure for collecting the compensation. He said dlrs. 300,000 each has been determined as compensation for a victim who was a 'bread-earner', and dlrs. 150,000 each for those who were not 'bread-earners'.

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All 297 persons on board the aircraft went to a watery grave off Iran's Hengam Island in the Persian Gulf on July 3rd 1988, when the regular Bandar-e 'Abbas-Dubai flight was hit by two missiles fired by the USS Vincennes shortly after take-off.

According to Jahromi the Islamic Republic of Iran has lodged other claims with the International Court of Justice at the Hague against the U.S. and that proceedings are underway. He said Iran is also seeking compensation for destruction of Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf by the U.S. Navy. Jahromi said Iran has sufficient evidences to support its claim on the basis of which the U.S. will have to pay compensation to Iran for its provocative destruction of Iranian platforms.

It is worth recalling, that the captain of the USS Vincennes, Will Rogers, who ordered the firing of missiles at the Iranian passenger plane, was decorated by the White House for his act of international terrorism in Iranian coastal waters. The unfortunate passengers on board the aircraft included 65 children and 42 foreign nationals.

Iran: Velayati Confirms No Iranian Fighters in Bosnia

LD2202165596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Velayati confirmed today that there are no Iranian fighters in Bosnia. Any Iranians in Bosnia, he said, are there at the invitation of the Bosnian government and are engaged in humanitarian efforts.

Velayati, who was speaking at a news conference after a disarmament conference session in Geneva, stressed the above point and said: Iranians have been present in Bosnia from the beginning of the war for the purpose of cooperating with the legitimate government in Sarajevo. He added: Among the humanitarian efforts carried out by the Iranians is a clinic run with the help of the Red Cross.

Iran: Diplomatic Efforts Made To Secure Release of Iranians

LD2102153096 Tehran IRNA in English 1506 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA — A group of Iranian reciters of the Holy Quran visiting Bosnia at the invitation of the Bosnian Islamic Community Organization [were detained] on Tuesday by Croat militants, a Foreign Ministry official said here on Wednesday. The Iranian reciters, who were on a tour of different Bosnian cities in the past two weeks on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadhan, were detained by the Croat militants at Jajce checkpoint while moving from Tesanj to Bihac.

The official said the group intended to visit Croatia too at the invitation of Croatian grand mufti, Omar Basheikh. The official said diplomatic efforts were made in Sarajevo and Zagreb to secure release of the Iranian group. He said the Iranian charge d'affaires to Sarajevo has held talks with Bosnian foreign minister, Jadranko Prlic on the arrest of Iranian cultural mission. Prlic has promised to help secure release of the Iranians, he said.

Iran: Diplomats Detained by IFOR Troops in Bosnia Return Home

LD2102130596 Tehran IRNA in English 1157 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 21 (IRNA) — Three Iranian diplomats who had been briefly detained by NATO forces illegally at a Bosnian Government center returned to Tehran Wednesday morning.

The three diplomats, Mohammad Pour-Salem, Asghar 'Ali-Shahi and 'Ali Jafarzadeh, were warmly welcomed upon their arrival at the Tehran Airport by their relatives, foreign ministry officials, and a large number of people.

Talking to reporters, the diplomats expressed surprise with their detention at one of the Bosnian Interior Ministry premises despite the fact that they had gone there at the official invitation of the Bosnian authorities.

The action of the Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) betrayed their pre-meditated plan to launch a new wave of propaganda campaign against Iran and the oppressed people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, they said.

Iran's Ambassador to Sarajevo, Mohammad-Ibrahim Taherian who has accompanied the three diplomats to Iran said IFOR, consisting of American, British and French forces, detained the Iranian diplomats at a government center for 48 hours in an insulting and inhumane manner.

The Bosnian Interior Ministry and President Alija Izetbegovic reacted to the illegal move of the IFOR as soon as they learned of the issue, Taherian said.

The ambassador added that the Bosnian people used to regard IFOR as messengers of peace but the event made them revise their outlook to en extent that they now look upon IFOR as usurpers.

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Iran: Tehran Seeks Compensation for Destruction of Oil Platforms

LD2202192996 Tehran IRNA in English 1902 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA — The U.S. has decided to pay compensation to Iran for its terrorist act of downing an Iranian passenger plane in 1988, following the indictment brought against Washington at the International Court of Justice.

Head of the Iranian office for international legal affairs, Eftekhar Jahromi told IRNA here on Thursday that the U.S. would pay a total of dlrs. 131.8 million, which amount includes dlrs. 30 million as compensation for the downed A-300 airbus, dlrs. 61.8 million to an escrow account with a Swiss bank and dlrs. 30 million towards banking disputes.

He said the compensation would be paid to the bereaved families of the 297 victims who went to a watery grave off Iran's Hengam Island in the Persian Gulf on July 3rd 1988, when the regular Bandar-e 'Abbas-Dubai flight was hit by two missiles fired by the USS Vincennes shortly after take-off.

He said the Islamic Republic of Iran has lodged other claim with the International Court of Justice at the Hague against the U.S. whose proceedings are underway. He said Iran is also seeking compensation for destruction of Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf by the U.S. Navy. Jahromi said Iran has sufficient evidences to support its claim on the basis of which the U.S. will have to pay compensation to Iran for its provocative destruction of Iranian platforms.

It is worth recalling, that the captain of the USS Vincennes, Will Rogers, who ordered the firing of missiles at the Iranian passenger plane, was decorated by the White House for his act of international terrorism in Iranian coastal waters. The unfortunate passengers on board the aircraft included 65 children and 42 foreign nationals.

Iran: Commentary Analyzes Causes of Unrest in Bahrain

LD2202140796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1056 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Although strict security measures have been taken to combat the unrest in Bahrain, the situation remains critical. After more than a year since the start of the unrest, the situation has not calmed down and a new wave of unrest has commenced covering a larger area. Last Sunday, America and Britain issued a statement calling on their citizens to avoid going to areas of the clashes.

The unrest in Bahrain started in the wake of the arrest last autumn of Shaykh 'Ali Salman, a Shiite clergyman. The Shiite clergyman was accused of trying to reopen the Bahraini parliament and attempting to incite the people to pressure the government to restore the parliament. The Bahraini parliament has been closed since 1975.

As the unrest started with the arrest of a Shiite clergyman, first attempts were made to attribute it to a small group. However, two weeks ago — after a Bahraini Sunni leader was arrested for supporting the demonstrations of the supporters to reopen the parliament — the fact that the unrest in Bahrain has a widespread popular base became evident.

Now that the unrest has grown and spread, attributing it to certain persons or groups is in fact a refusal to consider the root of the crisis, which could result in misdirecting the course of solving the problem.

Participating in political power, combating the foreign cultural onslaught, which was accelerated following the implementation of tourist attraction policies, and creating equal economic opportunities for various groups are among the most significant demands of the demonstrators in Bahrain.

The dissident groups expect to bring their demands to fruition with the restoration of the parliament. Therefore, they all insist on the reopening of the Bahraini parliament.

Political experts in the region believe that with the reopening of the Bahraini parliament, since there would be a lawful podium for objections to be raised, the possibility of the unrest subsiding would then come about.

Iran: Commentary Views Possible New Alliances in Afghanistan

LD2202233096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Only a day after the fresh Taleban attacks on government forces, Golboddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], yesterday told the Lebanese [owned] newspaper AL-HAYAH that he was studying a coalition with the government. This news comes after other reports suggested that Taleban and the Islamic and National Movement [Jonbesh-e Melli] of General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam might as well form an alliance.

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Although those plans are still in the form of suggestions, they are important for the possibility of new alliances being on the verge of emergence in Afghanistan. Therefore, observers are looking at obstacles to and requirements of the new alliances. With a glance at recent months' changes in Afghanistan, it can be seen that various parties wanting a change in the present situation consider the power balance in the country as the main obstacle to their aims, and the Afghan groups' desire for political supremacy has especially become an obstacle in the way of a comprehensive understanding between them in spite of the existing power balance. It seems that lack of understanding between the Afghan groups has persuaded them to change their pacts. The Rabbani government is, therefore, trying to secure the support of ['Abdolkarim] Khalili's Hezb-e Wahdat [Unity Party] and Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Eslami once again. This move, which is considered as a reaction to the efforts made for the formation of an alliance between the Taleban and General Dostam's National Movement, is facing important problems. Differences over the circumstances of political cooperation have made it difficult for them to reach an agreement. There is a difference between Hezb- e Eslami and the government over the control of the Ministry of Defense in case of an alliance. Taking into account those differences, a change in the existing alliances seems difficult in Afghanistan. However, the continuing stalemate in Afghanistan could well make such changes possible. The importance of any change in alliances in Afghanistan will depend on its impact on the peaceful solution of the Afghan problem. But it does not seem that a change in alliances and a confrontation of the new alliances in the country will help a political solution to the problem.

Iran: Motives Behind Visit of Afghan, Pakistani Ministers' Viewed

LD1802183596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1053 GMT 18 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Separate talks between the Foreign Ministry officials of Iran and two senior officials from Pakistan and Afghanistan began this morning. The two officials are visiting Tehran at the same time.

The objectives of the discussions by Najibollah Lafra'i, the Afghan acting foreign minister, and Pakistani Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Shaikh, and our country's Foreign Ministry officials have been announced to be bilateral relations between Iran and each of those two countries, as well as regional issues: In particular the Afghan crisis. Most political experts believe that the Afghan and Pakistani officials have come to Tehran with unified motives of expanding ties with Iran and eliminating of tension in Islamabad- Kabul ties. But their methods and statements will probably not be the same. Therefore, Iran will try to find a way to reduce the existing tension in the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan by making use of their common interests and objectives.

These experts believe that the simultaneous presence of two senior Afghan and Pakistani officials in Tehran is of particular importance with regard to its effect on relations between Kabul and Islamabad and the probable change in the present direction of those ties, and from the viewpoint of the message that the visits carry. That is because it seems that Islamabad and Kabul have sought to show their willingness to move away from their belligerent positions of the past five months and, second, the method that they have chosen to eliminate their misunderstandings is the most logical and practical way. Those indicate the determination of the two countries for a direct resolution of bilateral ties rather than indirect means, particularly the use of levers of pressure.

Hence, there is the hope that the selecting of discussion and endeavor to understand reasonable demands within the framework of existing resources have created the opportunity for Kabul and Islamabad to — while respecting each other's normal rights — work toward eliminating tension in the region, establishing political stability in Afghanistan, utilizing their common resources and, ultimately, eliminating the grounds for foreign power interventions in the region.

Iran: Editorial Views Afghan Talks in Tehran

NC2202144396 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 18 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Let Spring of Life Return to Afghanistan Alongside the Nature's Spring"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Afghan Foreign Minister, Najibollah Lafra'i is here for talks aimed at finding a solution to the devastating civil war in Afghanistan.

Pakistan Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh is also expected to arrive here in this connection.

Undoubtedly, Iran and Pakistan can play a very crucial role in finding a solution to the civil war if the two cooperate in a sincere manner.

Islamabad should use its influence in convincing the Taleban that military solution is not the best one to the Afghan crisis. The Taleban, unfortunately, are adamant and do not want to understand that it is not possible to deny the role of other Afghan groups in Afghan politics. If Taleban holds about half of the country's territory,

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other groups too hold the other half with capital Kabul as the artery of the country's politics.

The government of Borhanoddin Rabbani has practically sent the ball to the Taleban court by announcing that he is ready to hold talks with the group.

Numerous Afghanis have left their home and hearth not because they wanted to, but due to compulsions of war. Many have lost their near and dear. Still many bear the brunt of war in different ways.

If the Afghan groups are sincerely striving for the cause of Afghan people, fairness calls on them not to allow their compatriots to suffer during the coming spring and summer.

Civil war has taken the Afghan nation a hostage. Homelessness, orphanage, bloodshed, fratricide, etc. are the results of the civil war which has torn the country apart.

The innocent Afghan nation has put another cold, harsh winter behind. Afghanis now expect warlords not to take advantage of the coming spring for achieving their selfish goals. On the contrary, they expect the loaders to sit at the negotiating table and prepare a ground for the spring of life to return to Afghanis' homes as the nature's spring approaches.

Iran: Tehran Trying To Open 'New Chapter' in Kabul-Islamabad Ties

LD1902173096 Tehran IRNA in English 1421 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 19, IRNA — Iran is trying to put an end to the unfavorable Islamabad-Kabul ties and help the two countries open a new chapter in their bilateral relations, Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs Alaeddin Boroujerdi announced here Monday [19 February].

Boroujerdi said that Tehran talks have resulted in an outstanding development in relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, adding that the region and political scene of the two countries would witness practical developments in future.

However, he did not specify areas in which developments have been gained in Kabul-Islamabad ties.

Boroujerdi added that in his talks with the visiting Pakistani deputy foreign minister and Premier Benazir Bhutto's special envoy, Najmuddin Sheikh, significance of Iran's efforts was underlined.

He reiterated that war and conflict should come to an end in Afghanistan, adding that Iran was concerned about strong rumors that war would be intensified in Afghanistan within the coming days.

The Iranian official said Afghan groups should not repeat their past mistakes because continuation of clashes would have no result but massacre of innocent people and devastation of the country.

He added that stability and tranquility would be restored to Afghanistan solely through negotiations.

"Iran considers Rabbani's government as the only legal government of Afghanistan and would spare no efforts for realization of peace and stability in that country," announced Boroujerdi.

As for Najmuddin Sheikh's visit to Tehran, Boroujerdi said the Afghan issue was the basic topic of Tehran talks.

Iran and Pakistan agreed to encourage all Afghan parties to holding talks, reaching mutual understanding, avoiding clashes and praparing the ground for a session with the participation of all parties concerned.

As for Tehran-Islamabad ties, Boroujerdi concluded that expansion of bilateral cooperation would be followed up as a permanent policy.

Iran: Oil Minister Says U.S. Sanctions Failed

LD2202232396 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1944 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Studio interview with Petroleum Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh by unidentified correspondent — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] Good evening. In this week's program the issue of the aftermath of the failure of the U.S. oil sanctions against Iran will be discussed. Our respected guest this week is the Oil Minister Engineer Aqazadeh. Thank you for coming to the program. As the first question I'd like to say that about a year has passed since the U.S. oil embargo against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite that, what is the status of our oil export and production in general?

[Aqazadeh] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. As you mentioned, a long time has passed since [the beginning of] the U.S. sanctions against Iran. During that period there have been numerous reports worldwide about our international [oil] sales. Of course this has been reported domestically as well. Fortunately we've had a good year. That is because there were satisfactory conditions from the point of view of revenue and prices. Our country's income had a most satisfactory level with regard to the budget. For instance we had an income in 1374 which was $1.5 billion over and above the budget forecast. Our production and marketing conditions were also most satisfactory.

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Of course, at the beginning of the sanctions I said — in the course of an interview — that as a result of the misconceived nature of the sanctions as well as the lack of readiness of the international political atmosphere, no success could be envisaged for the sanctions. I said in particular that the sanctions would fail before the ink used in writing them had dried. And that is what actually happened. That resulted in the Americans thinking about a secondary sanction which can be debated in its own right.

From the point of view of production we tried to move within the framework of our quota, although our production capacity is greater than our quota. Of course recently some news media reported our production in recent months as 400,000 to 500,000 barrels more than our quota, which is not true. We have the production potential but did not produce as much. We are committed to work within the framework of our quota in OPEC.

From the point of prices, this year, on average, the prices obtained were more than that envisaged in the budget. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] If you allow me, I would like to go back to the issue of the sanctions [against Iran]. You mentioned that we have managed to increase our [oil] income as stipulated in the budget. [passage omitted] Have the sanctions been effective so far? Or have they failed as you yourself mentioned?

[Aqazadeh] I should mention that the oil market, due to its effect on the international economy and due to its dependence on free trade worldwide and the rules that govern such trade, is immune from any half-baked move. I would like to explain the matter to you from two different dimensions. One is the international dimension of the sanctions. You can see that throughout the world no country or company has welcomed the sanctions, and we managed very quickly to find other customers for what we used to sell to American companies, and there was no delay in doing that. Of course as soon as murmurs started about the sanctions we took the necessary precautions. We expanded our marketing all over the world and had already organized the necessary replacements. Therefore, as soon as the time of the sanctions was announced, we swiftly made the replacement without experiencing any break in our sales.

But you cannot find even one American oil company that supported their government's move. They even openly express disagreement with their government's move in their speeches, articles, and comments. Some of these disagreements are quite harsh. Of course they [U.S. companies] have no choice and have to abide by the regulations imposed by their country. But while abiding by such regulations, they object to them. [passage omitted]

Therefore, when we say that these [sanctions] have not succeeded and they have failed we are saying what the world is saying. It is what everyone says and everyone agrees with it. It is not possible to disregard and eliminate Iran, the second largest exporter of oil, from the world economy in which energy plays a key role. [passage omitted]

It is not possible to go against international rules and regulations. The Americans say that they support free trade and international rules and regulations as an accepted principle of their government, but in practice they go against that. Therefore, the U.S. move has no international backing. In my opinion such moves have no place in today' world.

We may look back and take what happened to Iraq as an example. Iraq found itself in certain special conditions where all countries were mobilized against it, and an international decision was taken against Iraq. In our case a single country is acting and it is a single country that wants to move against us, and that cannot attract international support and be effective. Therefore, the Americans will definitely fail to achieve their task [of imposing sanctions against Iran] as long as they continue such unilateral moves. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Mr. Aqazadeh, you said that America acted as a single country against us and that was the reason for its failure. But we were witness to American efforts to bring the Europeans into the game as well. Now, the Europeans did not make a definite response and it can be said that serious differences of opinion arose between America and Europe in this regard. What do you think?

[Aqazadeh] [passage omitted] The EU took a most fair and reasonable stance regarding the [U.S.] moves [to impose sanctions]. It said [to the Americans] that when you publicize and advocate your commitment to free trade how can you act against free trade rules. In a letter written [by the EU] to the U.S. parliament it pointed out: You make decisions against international rules and you are moving against the world. You can decide within the framework of your own borders but cannot extend [your decisions] to companies which are free and follow international rules.

Therefore a serious response was formed by the European countries, the third world countries and the developing states against that issue. You have the official statement of the British foreign ministry spokesman.

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They officially announced: We are against this American move. That is while Britain is one of America's close allies. The reason is that, truly, what the Americans are doing is a move against the current. [passage omitted]

Iran: Ambassador to Lebanon Cited on U.S. 'Anti-Iran Operations'

LD1802115596 Tehran IRNA in English 0921 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, Feb. 18, IRNA — The Islamic Republic of Iran is strong enough to foil all conspiracies hatched by the U.S. and Zionist regimes in the region, said Iranian ambassador to Lebanon, Homayun 'Alizadeh, here Saturday.

The ambassador, in an interview with the Lebanese weekly 'AL- BELAD,' said that the U.S. Administration this year exerted utmost pressure to undermine the Islamic Republic of Iran.

He added that decision of the American administration to prevent American and European oil companies from dealing with Iran and also allocation of a dlrs. 20-million budget by the U.S. Congress for anti-Iran operations are the latest of the U.S. anti-Iran measures.

He also referred to attempts of the White House to pressure Russia to bring Tehran-Moscow nuclear cooperation, which is designed for peaceful purposes, to a halt. All these attempts proved to be futile, said the Iranian diplomat.

'Alizadeh disclosed that the Islamic Republic of Iran has emerged victorious in the face of numerous plots of the U.S. and that America has also failed to turn other countries against Iran.

Iran: Velayati Offers To Help Boost Trade Between Africa, C. Asia

LD1702132796 Tehran IRNA in English 1302 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 17, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said here on Friday night that given the post- cold war condition, the African states would better develop their relations with the Central Asian and Caucasian nations.

Speaking in an 'Iftar' (fast breaking) ceremony, Velayati said that to this end Iran is ready to provide the necessary facilities and pave the way for the African states to have access to its transportation network to help boost trade among the African nations with Central Asia and Caucasus.

Ethiopian ambassador to Tehran, Muhammad Hasan Kahim, speaking as the dean of the African diplomatic corps in Tehran, appreciated Iran's special attention for cooperation with African nations.

Iran: Paper Notes Need for Muslim Unity on Palestinian Cause

NC2202150496 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 15 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Al-Quds [Jerusalem] Day: Keeping the Cause of Palestine Alive"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] On August 17, 1979, the late Imam Khomeyni designated the last Friday of the holy month of Ramazan to be observed as the Day of al-Quds [Jerusalem].

Ever since the announcement, Muslims throughout the world have been holding demonstrations on al-Quds Day for the liberation of holy al-Quds from the clutches of the Zionist regime.

Imam Khomeyni said, "The Day of al-Quds is the day of Islam. All Muslims must be vigilant and must understand how strong their spiritual and economic powers are. Muslims are one billion people, supported by God, Islam and the power of faith. Why should they be afraid?"

Although the statement's main thrust was liberation of al-Quds and the occupied Palestinian territories, we can easily discern that Imam Khomeyni had realized that liberation of the occupied territories was possible only through unity among Muslims and the oppressed.

Imam Khomeyni refers to three elements which, if mobilized, could transform Muslims into a great power. Faith, population and economic power. Faith is not only a common element which could unite Muslims, but is a divine inspiring force that gives extraordinary power to Muslims in facing the enemy.

Muslims constitute about one-fifth of the world population. Unfortunately, not being united, they are neither represented properly at the UN nor at other international fora.

Regrettably, the economic power of Muslims is presently used as a weapon against themselves. Global arrogance has pitted Muslims against Muslims; hence, their wealth and economic power is funnelled into financing intra-Muslim skirmishes.

Ironically, the Zionist regime has also realized that the surest way to the prolongation of its occupationist, annexationist policies is recourse to the dirty policy of divide and rule. The Zionist regime has thus far succeeded

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in concluding separate agreements with the PLO and Jordan while trying to reach separate agreements with Syria and Lebanon.

Al-Quds Day is an appropriate occasion to remind our Arab brothers: "United we stand; divided we fall." Damascus and Beirut are considered the last bastions of resistance against the Zionist regime. If the two Arab capitals give in to Zionist plots, the Middle East will be taken hostage to Israeli expansionism.

Unity among Muslims is the surest way to peace in the Middle East. Al-Quds day is an occasion to renew our oath of allegiance to the cause of Palestine. Let this auspicious occasion prevent the cause of Palestine from falling into oblivion.

Iran: West Said Alarmed by Unrest in Persian Gulf States

LD2202115896 Tehran IRNA in English 1117 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] London, Feb. 22, IRNA — Unrest in the sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf is starting to ring alarm bells in the West amid rising concern that separate problems in Qatar and Bahrain could combine to create a wider regional crisis.

Western worries are added to by the propaganda war being waged by Saudi dissidents against the royal family, which is reported to be engaged in a power struggle following King Fahd's decision to resume running affairs from Crown Prince 'Abdallah.

The unrest in Bahrain and this week's attempted coup in Qatar is complicated by the long-standing dispute between the two neighboring countries over the Hawar Islands, which is said to drawing in Saudi Arabia.

The potential conflict is seen spelling problems particularly for the U.S., which has its command base stationed in Bahrain and an arsenal of military hardware for its rapid reaction force in Qatar.

Diplomatic editor of THE GUARDIAN, Ian Black, says analysts point to mounting tension being caused by the over-dependence on the West, unnecessary arms purchases and criticism of the U.S. presence from such Saudi exiles as Mohammed al-Mas'ari.

He quotes one American diplomat warning that the real problem was the possibility that the Qataris were creating events that were "spinning out of control" and will have negative implications for the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC).

In December, Qatar's amir, Shaykh Bin-Hamad Khalifah al Thani, who deposed his father in a coup last year, walked out of the annual PGCC summit in Oman, but was now said to be calling for an emergency meeting of the council.

Washington was said by Black to be also seeking the same goal after accusations by Qatar that Bahrain, the UAE and Saudi Arabia had all played a role in last Monday's abortive coup attempt.

Some analysts suggest that it would be ironic if the domestic and regional problems led to the U.S. to intervene with its troops and hardware that is supposed to be stationed there against external threats.

Iran: Editorial Views Effects of Rushdie Issue on EU Ties

NC2202135096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 14 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Rushdie Issue Should Not Hinder Closer Iran-EU Ties"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Certain pressure groups in Europe have been trying to disturb Iran-Europe relations by politicizing the Salman Rushdie issue.

The simple fact is that on February 14, 1989, as a religious leader, the late Imam Khomeyni, uttered an Islamic decree on a person who had blasphemed the Holy Prophet (S) [peace be upon him and his scion] of Islam. According to Islam a person blaspheming the Prophet (S) of Islam is sentenced to death. This was a religious decree and Imam Khomeyni in his lifetime never intended to dispatch a commando to kill the renegade writer. The fact that the Fatwa was endorsed by Al-Azhar of Egypt, Indian and Pakistani Muslim ulema and scholars from other parts of the world, suffices to prove that the Fatwa was neither a state decree nor a personal one.

Unfortunately certain circles tried to fish in troubled water and by politicizing the issue spared no effort to exert pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the eve of the seventh anniversary of the Fatwa, the EU's Italian presidency said in a statement that it would continue to pursue a critical dialog with Tehran to try and resolve the issue.

The dialog is welcomed. The EU should be given a pat on the back for not submitting to pressures from circles determined to disturb Iran-Europe relations.

The EU should bear in mind few points if it is truly interested in a meaningful settlement of the issue: From the very beginning Iran has said that the issue is unalterable because it is an Islamic ruling, i.e., in accordance with the Islamic teachings no one is qualified to alter the decree. Secondly, the EU should

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avoid politicizing the issue because it would make it more complicated. Thirdly, Iranian officials in different capacities have said that Iran is not going to send any commando to kill the apostate author.

Moreover, Iran is sincere in respecting international law. The ball is indeed in the EU's court. The EU should, therefore, try to mend fences in order to pave the way for more intimate ties with Iran. The EU should not allow the Rushdie issue to be a fly in the ointment.

Iran: Fahd's Resumption of Duties, 'Abdallah's Prospects Viewed

NC2202194396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 22 Feb 96

[Report by 'Isam Hasan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Saudi King Fahd resumed his government duties yesterday, Wednesday [21 February] after recovering from his illness. King Fahd was taken to the hospital in December 1995 after suffering a stroke. On 1 January 1996 he turned over the country's affairs to his crown prince and half-brother Prince 'Abdallah.

It is not very well known how fit King Fahd is to run state affairs in light of his poor health, particularly as there were indications even before he fell ill that his administration of the country's affairs was inadequate.

In view of his recent illness and two months' absence from power, many observers believe that his role in running government affairs will now be smaller than before. They suggest that his resumption of duties might have followed pressures from some members of the Sa'ud family who do not want any political or economic reforms to be carried out.

Meanwhile, it seems that King Fahd's absence from power was beneficial to Prince 'Abdallah, crown prince and commander of the Saudi National Guard. King Fahd's trust in Prince 'Abdallah, illustrated by handing power over to him for two months, is a good precedent that will help prove his credentials as the next king. This is especially true because during his brief tenure in power, Prince 'Abdallah succeeded in improving Riyahd's relations with the Arab countries and other regional countries. During this period Saudi Arabia played host to King Husayn of Jordan and Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, whose relations with Riyadh were not so good because they had backed Iraq in the petroleum war of 1991.

Observers believe that Prince 'Abdallah will remain the likely choice in his capacity as middleman between the conservatives and the reformers within the Sa'ud family. He is also believed to be more acceptable to the Saudi opposition because of his religious piety and personal attributes, although the opposition still criticizes some of his domestic and foreign policies.

At any rate, King Fahd had so far been unable to remedy the political and economic problems resulting from the petroleum war. Apparently he cannot pacify the opposition with his very slow reform steps. Additionally his poor physical condition will raise more questions about his ability to handle problems.

Iran: Commentary Urges Algerian President To Avoid Violence

LD2202143596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algerian President Liamine Zeroual, in a message on the occasion of Id al-Fitr [end of Ramadan], addressing the Muslim nation of Algeria, once again stressed the policy of [a] serious purge in the armed Islamic groups, as well as national reconciliation in the country. Liamine Zeroual's message based on suppressing the government opponents was on the occasion of the Id al-Fitr, but the political experts have regarded his speech as reaction to the current violence in Algeria.

The current violence in Algeria indicate this reality that Liamine Zeroual, despite his promises for establishing stability and tranquillity in that country, has yet been unable to make any achievement in that field. Declaring the policy of suppressing the opponents for ending the internal crisis of Algeria, is not a new message which has to be considered as a new initiative by Liamine Zeroual. His message is merely an emphasis on continuation of those very same policies, which the militarymen of the country have adopted since 1992 — plunging Algeria into a crisis which still cast its shadow over the Algerian society.

Imposing the policy of suppression will not only entail no success for the Algerian regime to reach peace and stability, but will also further intensify the tension on the situation of the Algerian society.

On the other hand, Liamine Zeroual has announced that he desires a national reconciliation. Political observers believe that the Algerian president has repeatedly spoken of a national reconciliation to deceive the Algerian Muslims and opponent groups, but he has never taken a considerable measure for providing necessary conditions for reaching a national reconciliation. In case Liamine Zeroual will want to use power and omit the opponent groups from the political scene to reach a national reconciliation, such a measure will certainly be faced with failure. The three years of experience of the Algerian regime in suppressing the opponents has practically proven the failure of such policy.

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Anyhow, political observers believe that reaching a national reconciliation will only be possible with a situation which the Algerian president has not been able to provide. Not resorting to violence in confronting the opponents and opening ways for political talks with Islamic and national opponents, who believe in a political method for ending the crisis, are some measures necessary for reaching a national reconciliation which the Algerian regime has to take.

Iran: Indian Official Says Ties With Iran of 'Great Importance'

LD1802182596 Tehran IRNA in English 1807 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 18, IRNA — In a meeting here today with the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, the visiting Indian First Deputy Foreign Minister Salman Haidar announced that New Delhi attaches great importance to its ties with Tehran.

Referring to the two countries' joint economic commission the Indian Foreign Ministry official who arrived here today for a one-day visit to Iran, expressed hope that bilateral economic and trade cooperation will further expand.

Borujerdi expressed satisfaction over the upgrading cooperation between the two sides and hoped that Tehran-New Delhi multilateral cooperation would be boosted further through signing new agreements during the ninth joint economic commission.

Iran: Foreign Minister Discusses Ties With India's Haidar

LD1802204596 Tehran IRNA in English 2031 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 18, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and visiting Indian Deputy Foreign Minister Salman Haidar today reviewed Tehran-New Delhi relations and bilateral cooperation.

At the meeting, Haidar said that relations between the two countries haved noticeably grown, and added that India is eagerly pursuing the continuation of this policy.

The Indian official said that he was in Tehran in connection with upcoming joint economic commission of the two countries.

Haidar underlined the significance of the Asian railway network in promoting regional and Asian cooperation, and stressed the need for greater expansion of mutual cooperation between Iran and India.

Iran, which already has railway connections with the Turkish and Pakistani networks, is to be connected soon the the larger central Asian railway via the northeastern city of Sarakhs on the Turkmenistan border. India and Pakistan, although at odds with each other over Kashmir, are connected by a railway network.

Velayati expressed satisfaction over expansion of cooperation between Tehran and New Delhi, and said the senior officials of the two countries are interested in expansion of bilateral ties.

He stressed that such an attitude can play a constructive role in promotion of relations and regional and international peace.

Iran: Tehran Views Significance of Indian Official's Visit

NC1902080996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 19 Feb 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Indian first deputy foreign minister, Salman Haidar, and Foreign Minister Dr. Velayati, have discussed bilateral relations and cooperation. The high-ranking Indian diplomat stated at the meeting that the two countries' joint commission is a good means for examining and deciding on expanding bilateral cooperation. New Delhi's and Tehran's interest in expanding economic and commercial relations suggest agreements on expanding broad bilateral cooperation will be reached in the ninth joint commission of India and Iran.

Referring to the significance of the Asian railway project in expanding regional and Asian relations, observers say broader bilateral cooperation is positive. The process became more dynamic after President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's recent visit to India and his constructive talks with Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao.

Political analysts believe a serious approach to following up the agreements reached between the two leaders can play a constructive role in expanding bilateral relations and in regional and world peace. During the past few years India has tried to expand its relations with Central Asian countries to implement its new economic development projects, which were inevitable, especially after the Cold War.

Iran—as a significant bridge linking the countries of the region—enjoys special priority and importance in New Delhi's foreign policy. There is no doubt that India's economic presence in Central Asia via Iran will

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enhance the region's ability to adopt new political-economic measures vis-a-vis hegemonistic powers and economic monopolies. Meanwhile, constructive competition among regional countries, especially economic, is the most important element for collective stability and security in southern and central Asia.

Iran: Habibi Meets With Moroccan Envoy

LD1702215496 Tehran IRNA in English 2143 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 18, IRNA — Moroccan ambassador to Tehran Mohamed Azeroual told First Deputy President of Iran Hasan Habibi here Saturday that Moroccan prime minister looked forward to visiting Tehran with the idea of entering into trade and economic agreements with Iran.

He said the private sector in Morocco was interested in broadening trade relations with Iran and expressed hope that relations between Iran and Morocco would shortly develop into a model for other countries.

The first deputy president of Iran, in response, expressed his sympathtic feelings with the people and government of Morocco for the recent killer flood in that country, and said that the Islamic Republic stressing priority on relations with Asian and African countries naturally welcomes further development of cultural, economic and political relations with that country.

Habibi said Iran could play a leading role as an intermediary between Morocco and the Central Asian states.

Iran: Karrubi Interviewed on Elections

NC2202160296 Tehran SALAM in Persian 8 Feb 96 pp 1, 5

["Exclusive interview" with Hojjat ol-Eslam Karrubi, secretary of the Tehran Militant Clerics, by an unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [SALAM] What is your assessment of the conditions governing the fifth term Majles elections?

[Karrubi] As someone acquainted with the affairs of the Majles, I was worried until some time ago that the elections would be monotonous, that multiple lists would not exist, and that only one organized list would be put forth. Had this been the case, we could not have called this a competition. But, the new movement started by the officials of the system who issued their statements has also affected others. The fact that they issued a statement and went after people to hand in a list seems to have made others more active in putting forth a list also. [passage omitted]

Of course, my personal opinion is that we should grant people more space to act in. In other words, we should instill more motivation in the people and groups that are faithful to the Constitution, to the Islamic Republic, and to the Imam, may his soul be sanctified. Since the officials are people from inside the rule, I feel that the situation has, God willing, improved from this aspect and that competition will be more serious and the elections more enthusiastic.

[SALAM] You gave an interview to an IRNA correspondent, from which we gleaned that you spoke more in favor of the officials serving the country's reconstruction [who recently announced their stand on the elections] than in favor of the traditional right. Is this a correct assessment?

[Karrubi] I should state two points in relation to what is referred to as my being in favor of one or the other. If you recall, for some time the mass media had said that the danger of removing the clerics is serious and that the technocrats are trying to make "technology" the pivot instead of "religion." I felt that the dear brothers and sisters who brought up this issue and warn the people are propounding this issue vis-a-vis the emergence of a group outside the system and the rule.

Well, this is something noteworthy. When the group of officials emerged, we saw that the issue of technocrats was repeated. It was under these conditions that I was asked this question. In answer, I said that I approve of this group of officials since they are forces from within the system and have been working within this framework for years. They are pious Muslim forces that have been serving the country. I didn't want to enter this issue. (I wanted to say that these are the same people who, four years ago, opposition with them was considered to be opposition to the Prophet. How come they have suddenly become pro-Western?) I said that these people are friends who were in the system and who have been serving the system.

If this is approval, then yes. I said this. But I welcome the emergence of this group and the heating up of the elections' scene, in the same way that I welcome the entry of other forces onto the scene.

At any rate, definitely the presence of these forces may change the atmosphere and composition of the current Majles, as an absolute majority will be absent, since part of the Majles will consist of newly-emerged people. Other issues as well have been a factor, such as the

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remarks made at the Friday prayers that people whose credentials were rejected in the past can re-apply now.

[SALAM] Although the Militant Clerics have stated that they will not put forth a list of candidates, some groups following the Imam's line that also support the Militant Clerics have attempted to put forth a list. Does this mean discord and differences inside the faction of the Imam's line, or is there coordination among these forces?

[Karrubi] Your statement that Militant Clerics and these groups are following the Imam's line is very correct, but this does not mean that other forces do not also follow the Imam's line. The groups that support the Militant Clerics have been tried and have proven to be pious and combatant. Others are also moving within the framework of the aspirations of the revolution and of the Imam's views. These groups are following the Imam's line.

Another point is that the rift you have mentioned does not exist among the groups agreeing with the Militant Clerics. These groups favor the Militant Clerics and consider this association to be their backbone. Of course, I should also say that apart from me, the Militant Clerics includes known personalities who were trusted by the Imam, and many of the brothers in the association hold decrees that were issued by His Eminence the Imam. A large number of them were the Imam's representative at various forums. Even some of our brothers were relatives of the Imam, and their group (that is, the Militant Clerics Association) was endorsed by the Imam. This association is considered by the groups that support it to be their backbone.

Meanwhile, a long time ago, we had concluded that we would not put forward a list of candidates — and there is no need for us to elaborate on this topic now — or volunteer to be candidates. On the other hand, because of the advice from the Imam and the leadership, and since our system is parliamentary, we call on the people to participate in the elections, considering this to be a divine duty. You can see that we have a system in which the Imam, as its leader, called the people to elections five times in a year. From 11 February 1979 to March 1980, the Imam took the people to the polling stations five times. In other words, the Imam considered the people's votes to be very significant. [passage omitted]

Our work is to safeguard the revolution, which is the Imam's legacy. We have spoken to people who have said that we should not participate in the elections. We have encouraged them to participate. Of course, we hope that the field will be prepared in such a way that these groups will be able to carry out healthy and positive activities. Votes are something that should be cast by the people in order to choose their deputies.

[SALAM] Recently the rightist faction has started a propaganda campaign alleging that the decision by the Militant Clerics not to submit a list of candidates is a type of protest against the revolution. It seems that these propaganda attacks are a prologue to harsher attacks by this faction. Since the Militant Clerics Association has explained the reasons for not submitting a list, how do you regard these propaganda attacks?

[Karrubi] I would like to make one point. I do not wish to participate in these attacks or to answer them.

I think that three comments were made about this. Some of our friends commented briefly in the press out of sympathy and wrote that it is not sufficient for a group to go to the polling stations and to encourage others to vote and that a political group should strive to forward its own list of candidates. These people were speaking out of sympathy, and what they said was soon forgotten.

Some others were unkind toward the association in their publications and did not want to have any rivals in the elections at all.

A third group, with good intentions, called on us to put forward a list of candidates. The esteemed president was among this group. Others only resorted to abuses, something that I don't want to go into. As to whether this situation will continue or not, I think this issue has already ended.

Of course, in the thirty or forty years before and after the revolution, we were the targets of many insults and attacks by SAVAK [the Shah's secret police], the Monafeqin [hypocrites—pejorative for the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization] and others. It is no problem for us to be insulted by some of our friends now. This is hard to take for those who have not been insulted before, but we were insulted when we were religious students and were beaten up and tortured by SAVAK. Of course, one is disappointed when friends act like this, but never mind.

[SALAM] What is your opinion on parties and factionalism? How do you see the link between the elections and factionalism? Some believe that the people's presence in the elections is only a pledge to the system. Is this where the elections stand?

[Karrubi] This is an eternal point of discussion about which I would like to state a few points.

First of all, it is regrettable that only during elections are serious remarks made about parties and factionalism, which die down after the elections. Of course, I see the propounding of the issue of factionalism as being more serious this time and I see the debates and discussions on this are more profound. I believe the fact that we

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have a parliamentary system and rely on the people's votes is of significance. [passage omitted]

At any rate, the people's votes are very important to us. We need parties and parties will inevitably be formed. There are groups now also. But they should enter the scene strongly. And it is only natural that when there are no groups to say what they have to say, then the people will have to rely on their own personal knowledge when they vote and not on party platforms that talk about the future, possible problems, problems that exist, why they have entered the elections, what they will do for the people in the future, what is needed, and what shortcomings there are. It is only when such platforms are propounded that elections acquire a meaning.

However, the officials should prepare the grounds for the growth and progress of the parties.

I recall that when I heard an official, who held a sensitive post in the legislative branch, warn against the formation of parties since, according to him, parties were the source of discord, I was very surprised. This showed how much they were faithful to the laws that they themselves approved.

Yes, we should accept that parties should be healthy, their approach should be healthy, and they should not be dependent on foreigners and be tools in the hands of others. Yes, a party says what it has to say, has rivals, and should speak up to the extent of not harming the system, the people's aspirations, and the national interests of the people and the country. Parties should not say things that will weaken the people's faith. This is not right.

[SALAM] Before the discussion on the need for parties, we should have a discussion on politicizing society. During the past few years, many discussions have been held on the need to depoliticize society. When the duties of a cabinet are only work, or when they say about the Majles that if the deputies want to hold political discussions they can discuss Israel and America, and there is nothing wrong with this, and when society sees that politicization is an expensive issue, then it will not be prepared to undertake such expenses and such a task. What impact have the recent developments had on the atmosphere in your opinion?

[Karrubi] The point is what will happen if society is not political in nature or if people don't understand things? This will be tragic. We say that the Imam has politicized society, that the people are aware, that they are present on the scene and that they know what they have to do. [passage omitted]

[SALAM] As far as the two processes and inclinations in the rightist faction are concerned, do you consider it possible that they will once again unite after all these disputes and statements?

[Karrubi] In other words, do you think that some people will be left dangling in mid-air? No way! One part of the list is common. But a larger part consists of individual candidates. If an alliance is formed, naturally this will mean only four to five people, in which case the Militant Clergy should also reduce its candidates to this number. This elimination is not merely a personal issue or an issue of going to the Majles. It does not seem to be favorable or logical. The elimination of a number of people from among the Militant Clergy's list will be an insult to a number of people. It seems that things have gone beyond the possibility of renewing the alliance. [passage omitted]

[SALAM] In one of the rightist faction's newspapers, it has been said that "the Majles elections is not proxy [vekalat] in its full sense, let alone the presidential elections and the elections for the leadership"... [ellipsis as published]

It seems that differences emanate from two schools of thought on the role of the people's vote. What is your opinion?

[Karrubi] I have not read this. This is a complicated issue which we can discuss in detail after the elections. However, we follow the Imam's views. [passage omitted]

We believe that the system's legitimacy is based on the people's votes. This is exactly the principle that the Imam also emphasized; and in this era of "absence" [of the Imam Mahdi], it is only through the votes of the people that legitimacy can be achieved.

Iran: Official Elaborates on Eligibility of Candidates

LD2202141396 Tehran IRNA in English 1352 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA — Head of the Guardian Council's board for monitoring the forthcoming parliamentary elections Hojjat-ol-Eslam Kazem Sadeqi said here on Thursday that practical adherence to the Islamic Shari'ah, Velayat- e-Faqih (office of the supreme rule of the jurisprudent) and the Constitution are the main criteria for the approval of the eligibility of the candidates.

Speaking to IRNA correspondent covering the Majles elections, Hojjat-ol-Eslam Sadeqi said that having penal record, being member in terrorist groups, playing role in consolidation of the former regime and having been fined would be among reasons for the rejection of the candidates.

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The official hoped that the people would elect eligible candidates with all the required Islamic, revolutionary and political criteria to build a flourishing country.

Iran: Commentary Criticizes 'Traditional Right'

NC2202133196 Tehran SALAM in Persian 7 Feb 96 p 13

[Unattributed commentary: "Fundamentalism Until Where?!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] These days differences between the traditional right wing and the modern right wing have been inevitably revealed, and the golden era of their co-existence—which had as its objective removing the faction following the line of the Imam and Hezbollah—has now reached the point of separation and a power struggle. Analyses in the publications of the traditional right criticizing the government faction and former allies can be seen. And, frankly speaking, it is a pity if we deprive our dear readers of the sweet taste of these disputes.

An article published in the latest bulletin of the Tehran Militant Clergy is devoted to a study on the reasons for the emergence of the modern right—read technocrats. Without making any mention on the initial reason for their alliance with this same unfavorable process, disregarding the question this alliance's formation may raise in the minds of their readers, and as if they have suddenly come upon some political knowledge and God-given ability to discover this process, the article writes:

"The disintegration of the East Bloc stemmed from the lack of true faith in God. This disintegration revealed the economic impasse faced by the government—that is, the inefficiency of a state economy—which came to be recorded as a global experience. And a part of those people inside the country who believed that a state economy could solve society's problems were affected by this experience... [ellipsis as published] As a result, these people went from one extreme—state economy—to another extreme—free economy."

It is as if when this type of Western capitalist economic pattern was being copied in the country, the traditional right had not hatched from the egg and did not have the country's economy in its hands! It is as if it had no tribune at its disposal to speak against these policies, which it now considers to be so heretical. But the tribunes of the fourth term of the Majles and of the Friday prayers, the newspapers, and the Voice and Vision [radio and television], were all completely in its hands. It did not allow any slogan to be heard but the slogan that considered opposition to Hashemi and his government to be tantamount to opposition to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his scion! And it was with the help of this slogan that this faction actually acquired power and built the same policies that it is today criticizing. Also, it was this faction that attributed the consequences of these policies to others—read technocrats!

We read in continuation the political analysis of the same bulletin:

"A wrong analysis of world developments was not limited to the economic field. It also rapidly spread to the political, cultural, and even ideological field and gradually a new breed of quasi- liberals was formed—who came to be known as "technocrats".

Definitely the commentators of the Tehran Militant Clergy forget who the parents of this infant that grew so quickly to affect all scenes are! Why wasn't the fundamentalism that the leaders of the Tehran Militant Clergy speak about now observed from the very beginning. Why is it not prepared to include the names of five candidates from among their former allies on their candidates list— as a gesture of gratitude for these people's help since it came to power by resorting to slogans demanding comfort and end the continuation of the revolution (read extremists of the era of the Imam, may his soul be sanctified) and calling for extravagance and detente in foreign policy—which was what attracted the votes of the rich to the traditional right? Why did you, who today speak about fundamentalism and pretend to have revolutionary sincerity, give in to a matrimony, setting aside a huge political process which was devoted to the late Imam, and resort to various unethical means and join a process that you are now portraying as a rod to the back of the revolution? Have you realized your mistake? Or is it something else and you still have the same intentions—coming to power and seizing full control—in mind, but feel that the same child that you brought up may pull the rug from under your feet?

This is the same child which you now claim is "ignoring commitment to the revolution and to Islam" and "believes that the new world order should be accepted and a world economy be digested" and that it should "retreat in front of the bullying by the camp of the arrogant."

If the process of the liberals and technocrats that you refer to—that is, your former allies—with its beliefs has affected the country's foreign policy in such a way that your wailing now rises to the skis, what were your associates doing in the country's foreign policy establishment at that time?

Which process did that group, who compromised on the Salman Rushdie issue to the extent that they are

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prepared to sign a promissory note with the West and America that they will not pursue the decree on Salman Rushdie—something that was fortunately prevented with timely interference—belong to? Were they from among your own people—the fundamentlists—or from among your former allies?! And if eight years after the tragic and pitiless massacre of Iranian pilgrims in Holy Mecca it was stated that this was the outcome of the actions of the left—or, better said, the government that was in power during the era of Imam Khomeyni, may his soul be sanctified—and you wash the filthy hands of the Saudis who committed this unforgivable crime, at a time when the Imam stated that nothing can cleanse their hands, and you list this under your revolutionary acts, who do you attribute this to? To yourselves or to the modern rightist technocrats?

Iran: New Group To Put Forward Candidates for Election

LD1702143096 Tehran IRNA in English 1126 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 17, IRNA — Former information minister, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Mohammadi Rayshahri, said here Saturday [17 February] that he and others holding the same views intend to form a group titled 'The Society for Defending the Values of the Islamic Revolution.'

He added that the group will nominate candidates for the forthcoming parliamentary elections, stressing that, presently, the legal procedure to this end is in process.

Regarding the members of the group, Hojjat ol-Eslam Rayshahri pointed out that they are devoted to the Islamic government, and that their names will be announced in due course. He also said that the formation of the group has been approved by many of the country's authorities, adding that the candidates to be nominated by the group will be selected based on their qualifications and regardless of their affilation to any political factions.

Iran: Majles Candidates Declared Eligible To Run for Elections

LD1802150496 Tehran IRNA in English 1348 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 18, IRNA — Executive committees to monitor the forthcoming Majles (parliamentary) elections, scheduled for March 8, have confirmed eligibility of 2,872 candidates.

Latest reports from provincial centers Sunday said that 2,872 candidates have been declared eligible from among 5,359 candidates throughout the country.

Meanwhile, 227 nominees withdrew their candidacy prior to the investigation of the executive committees over their eligibility.

In Tehran province, eligibility of 374 out of 1,071 candidates have been approved while 18 others have withrawn after registration.

Iran: Qom Ulema Call For Massive Turnout in Elections

LD1802151696 Tehran IRNA in English 1407 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Holy Qom, feb. 18, IRNA — Speaker of the Assemby of Experts, Ayatollah 'Ali Meshkini said here on Sunday the revolutionary people of Iran would display their powerful presence in the forthcoming parliamentary elections as they had already done so in the referandum of the Constitution with 89 percent yes votes.

Ayatollah Meshkini expressed hope that the theologians of the holy city of Qom would remind people of the importance of their participation in the parliamentary polls, without taking the side of a certain group or political wing.

Ayatollah Javadi Amoli put emphasis on the presence of the people in the parliamentary elections and described it as a fundamental matter of a system.

He said elections play an effective role in the Islamic system so that the people should put aside their differences and take part in the elections.

Ayatollah Fazel Lankarani underlined the importance of parliament (Majles) and said the ulema, lecturers and the theologians should assume their vital role in the forthcoming elections.

Ayatollah Nasser Makarem Shirazi said taking part in the elections as important as worshipping.

He said the social conscience should be displayed in the critical period of the elections.

The executive director of the theological school of Qom, Ayatollah Ostadi said that people should elect carefully the candidates so that the incompetent people could not enter the parliament.

Ayatollah Ostadi said the people should elect those who are committed to Islamic values, efficient, brave and sympathetic with the country.

Ayatollah Bani-Fazl, lecturer at the theological school in Qom, said those who will enter the fifth parliament, should always remember the sufferings of the deprived classes of society and be at the service of the people.

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The ayatollah termed participation in the forthcoming parliamentary elections as an inevitable Islamic and national obligation.

He said the parliament should serve the people regardless of any factionalism.

The forthcoming parliamentary elections will be held in Iran on March 8.

Iran: Candidates Must Obtain Permission for Printing Posters

LD1802201596 Tehran IRNA in English 2008 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 18, IRNA — Deputy Minister of Press and Propagation Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 'Ali Akbar Ash'ari, said on Sunday [18 February] that all candidates for Majlis elections and groups supporting them should obtain licence for printing any material including handbills, brochures and posters.

He told IRNA that any form of promotional campaign for candidates without permission of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance is forbidden.

Iran: Rafsanjani May Help Reconstitute Islamic Republic Party

LD1902112096 Tehran IRNA in English 1006 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 19, IRNA — There is a possibility that the dissolved Islamic Republic Party (IRP) would be re-formed. The above statement was announced here Monday by chairman of the board of directors of Iran's Central Cooperatives Chamber, 'Abolqasem Sarhaddizadeh, according to the Persian morning daily 'SALAM'.

He added that President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani will probably take steps to re-form the party.

Iran: Reyshahri Announces Establishment of New Political Group

LD1902150896 Tehran IRNA in English 1426 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 19, IRNA — Former Information Minister Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri said here on Monday that "The Society for Defence of the Values of the Islamic Revolution" would start full political activities after passing all legal procedures. Speaking at a press conference, Reyshahri said the society was not a trade union and its activities would not be confined to a specific period.

He said the formation of political groupings was essential for the Islamic Republic, adding "we are against partisan activities as practiced in western countries which are the cause of discord and hegemonism." The idea of the establishing the political grouping dated back to a long time ago and now "we are pursuing legal procedures," he said.

Reyshahri said the Society for Defence of the Values of the Islamic Revolution would support the individuals and the political currents that are operating independently. He said the society would introduce a list of 20 candidates for Tehran constituency in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. He added that his society would probably introduce candidates in the provincial capitals.

The majority of candidates to be introduced by the society have already been introduced by other groups, he said.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Reyshahri said the grouping would work to promote the lofty goals of the late Imam Khomeyni, the guidelines of the leader of the Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i and to unite political groups on the basis of velayat-e faqih [guardianship of the jurisconsult] and the leadership. On possible coalition with other parties, Reyshahri said his party has not held any talks on possible coalition.

Iran: TEHRAN TIMES Urges Revitalization of Party System

LD2102114096 Tehran IRNA in English 1053 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA — The English- language 'TEHRAN TIMES' in its editorial on Wednesday underlined importance of revitalization of party system in the country and cited advantages of the party system in country's political development.

The editorial warned that the recently formed political groupings such as "Kargozaran-e Sazandegi" [Reconstruction Officials] and "Society for Defence of the Values of the Islamic Revolution" may vanish from our politics as soon as the elections for the fifth Majles are over, if they are not converted into proper political parties.

It referred to the announcement of 'Abolqasem Sarhaddizadeh early this week that President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani may reorganize the Islamic Republic Party, saying that, in that case the president will do a great service to the nation. The editorial called upon all those who care to see a prosperous Iran in near future to give a helping hand in this herculean task to the president.

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Iran: Elections Committee Issues Ruling on Unsuccessful Candidates

LD2102213796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Guardian Council Central Election Supervision Committee announced on Wednesday night:

Since the rejection of the eligibility of those election candidates for the fifth Majles — whose candidacy has been rejected by the executive committees at the relevant constituencies and the provincial supervision committees — has been endorsed by the Central Election Supervision Committee, the supervision committees nationwide are duty-bound to inform candidates about the results as soon as possible, through the relevant governorate or district office, so that they will have the opportunity to lodge an appeal in time.

Rejected candidates can submit their appeal to the Guardian Council within 24 hours.

Iran: IPO Urges Electorates To Vote in Majles Elections

LD2202103996 Tehran IRNA in English 0831 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA — Head of the Islamic Propagation Organization (IPO) Hojjat-ol-Eslam Mahmud Muhammadi Araqi urged the electorates, especially the youths, to massively participate in the elections.

In an interview published in the English-language daily KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL on Thursday, he noted that massive participation in the elections is not only fulfilment of religious and national obligations or playing a role in the country's fate but also a demonstration negating global arrogance.

On the composition of the fifth Majles, he said that the best and learned from all groups of the Islamic revolution should enter the Majles.

Referring to social justice and its role in the elections, he noted that the people attach great importance to social and economic justice along with the country's developments and construction and this can be achieved by electing candidates who have been exposed to deprivation.

He stressed that one of the main characteristics of the candidates should be bravery and ability to resist world powers.

Iran: Paper Warns Against Liberals Entering Majles

NC2202161596 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 6 Feb 96 p 2

[Commentary by Hoseyn Shari'atmadari: "Capitalism's Adopted Sister"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The war between the rich and the poor — which the late Imam, may his soul be sanctified, spoke about and warned should be taken into consideration — is not a theoretical duel limited only to the mind and some books. It is a full-scale war that is actually being waged and is an arena where, on the one hand we have the capitalists and those who amass wealth and, on the other hand, the deprived and the oppressed; and the strengthening of one means the weakening and vulnerability of the other. Neglecting this can have unfavorable consequences. And this is why His Eminence the Imam, may his soul be sanctified, emphasized this point over and over again so that the capitalists and the rich who give no thought to the problems of others and to religion would not return to the scene. Although the mere presence of the capitalists is an ugly and unacceptable phenomenon, the tragedy occurs when they and their minions gain access to the decision-making centers.

In the heat of the elections for the fifth Majles, reports have spoken of some capitalists who are using their easily-gained money to send their own candidates to the Majles. Although the political atmosphere and the people's alertness and maturity are such that these efforts are unlikely to succeed, the issue is so significant that even a mere possibility should be taken seriously. We have some points to make on this:

A. Due to public aversion toward the capitalists, the candidates whom they have in mind will not use specific and legible labels, and more attention will be needed in order to identify them. Although this group's candidates will repeat our slogans, their performance and behavior will show that they are aliens. They will have a rich and comfortable social life, and although in the campaigning they may speak about friendship with and support for the deprived, they will resort to questionable campaign methods such as throwing expensive parties, distributing goods, and publishing and disseminating colorful and costly posters and so on.

B. Capitalists can infiltrate the Majles not only through candidates who are dependent on them, but through ideas and outlooks, the best example of which is liberalism. Liberalism is the capitalists' prescription for ruling and is its adopted sister who acts a "steamroller" and "flattener" to open up the way. Under the current

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conditions, we should refer to the existence of two types of liberalism, "labelled liberalism" and "covert liberalism" in our Islamic homeland. Labelled liberalism is a known political process that has shown, many times over, that it is either directly linked with foreigners or that its distorted outlook serves the capitalist powers. The years after the revolution and especially the years of the imposed war proved the bitter reality that this group acted as the enemy's fifth political column. And this bitter reality has not been erased from the people's minds. Although the labelled liberals are known to the people, recent reports speak of their efforts to participate in the fifth term elections, without stating their group inclinations. Two possibilities connected with this should be noted. The first is that identified individuals in this group will become candidates. In this case, on the basis of the explicit views of His Eminence the Imam, may his soul be sanctified, the Council of Guardians should decide on their credentials. But it is likely that the labelled members of this group already know that their credentials will be rejected by the Council of Guardians and that they will register as candidates merely in order to stir up commotion, since this group has exploited various means before. The second possibility is that this group will put forward as candidates people who are not well known, and this will require carefulness when electing candidates.

C. Unfortunately, during the past few years another outlook which should be referred to as covert liberalism has emerged on the country's political scene. The views and stands of those with this philosophy are in unison with or similar to liberalism, but they are not on the liberals' official list. Some of them even consider the liberals defunct and liberalism to be a deviationist path. But their ideas and deeds are very similar to the liberals. These people include those who do not show a great deal of sensitivity on the issue of safeguarding Islamic and revolutionary values, those who see salvation in turning toward America, those who follow Western prescriptions in economic, social, and cultural affairs, those who do not care about the deprived and the oppressed, and so on. These people can be identified by their outlooks and views. And a look at their performance record during the past few years will clearly show whether they truly attach importance to the people and their problems and whether they share the people's worries.

Iran: Ansar-e Hezbollah Issue First Statement on Elections

NC2202162396 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 12 Feb 96 p 2

[Report on the "first statement" on the elections by the Ansar-e Hezbollah group; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Ansar-e Hezbollah group has issued a statement on the special criteria for electing an appropriate deputy to the fifth Majles.

The statement stressed the importance of associating with the deprived and the poor and of leading a simple life as a major criterion for entry into the Majles. It said: Neglecting this principle may result in the entry of the indifferent rich, the castle-dwellers and their hirelings, and the minions of the capitalists into the Majles.

The war between the rich and the poor, which should also be pursued in the Majles, calls for sympathetic soldiers. They believed in the remarks by the Prophet of God, peace be upon him and his scion, when he told the poor: "living with you and dying next to you!"

Yes, a deputy who thinks about the "shah's gate to the grand civilization" rather than about economic justice is a deputy who serves the capitalists and not the people.

The statement also said: Besides thinking that the road to progress must be through the establishment of an alliance with and even bowing down before capitalism, these people will give free reign to bands of plunderers and hoarders, who are the main reason for the high prices and artificial inflation. This will increase the gap between the classes, fan the flames of economic discord, and prevent the implementation of God's teachings against the pillagers of national wealth.

The statement stressed the need for the people's alertness in choosing the best in the elections. It said: Passive alignment with America, pulling away from the principles of the revolution, moving closer to compromise or showing leniency toward the Zionist enemy, and trampling on the irreversible decree for the execution of the treacherous Salman Rushdie are issues that are very regrettably being murmured by some infiltrators of the regime. If this is not a dependent process, it is at least a cowardly and distrustful attempt to infiltrate the fifth Majles. The people's vigilance in getting rid of such dregs is necessary.

The statement encouraged the entry of deputies who participated on the front lines of the Sacred Defense for eight years, who smelled the gunpowder and saw the blood shed by the martyrs, or of deputies who sincerely served behind the front lines but longed to serve on the fronts. It said: The fifth Majles should be a sensitive

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Majles. It should be resistant and decisive about the country's ethical, social, and cultural sensitivities. It should keep the fundamentals of the revolution out of the liberals gunreach and not show any negligence in safeguarding religious ethics and beliefs in the various areas.

Iran: Radio To Broadcast Kurdish Programs in Northern Iraq

NC1802204096 Paris AFP in English 1432 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 18 (AFP) — Iran's state-run radio is to broadcast programs in the Kurdish language in northern Iraq, a newspaper said Sunday [18 February].

The initiative is in "response to demands by the population and Islamic groups" in the Kurdish-held region, said KEYHAN daily, quoting an official of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Organisation (IRIB), Ardeshir Zabolizadeh.

Zabolizadeh, who will head the radio's new service, said 90 minutes of programs will be aired daily for northern Iraq in order to "propagate the fundamentals of Islam ... and counter foreign propaganda" relayed to Iraqi Kurds.

The radio, which airs programs in some 20 languages, already has a Kurdish-language service, but it is aimed at its own Kurdish population.

Iran: Institutes, Shops Banned From Using Foreign Names

LD1902072096 Tehran IRNA in English 0709 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 19, IRNA — Institutes, workshops and shops are not allowed to use foreign names and terms, Chairman of the Academy of Farsi Language and Literature, Gholam 'Ali Haddad-'Adel, said.

In an interview with the English-language daily 'IRAN NEWS' printed Monday, he added that in the coming months, the Iranian parliament will be passing a law according to which shops will be prohibited from having foreign names.

However, he stated that there is no intention to replace all Arabic and other foreign words with Persian terms, as some alien terms have already become part of the Farsi language over the years.

The goals pursued by the Academy of Farsi Language and Literature include preserving the genuineness of the Farsi language as a symbol of Iran's national identity, polishing and refining the language to express scientific and literary thought and make this generation and the ones to come familiar with the country's history.

Haddad-'Adel added that the academy also intends to promote Farsi language and literature at home and abroad and make the language dynamic and in tune with scientific and technical advancements.

"The academy aims at approving a uniform inscription for official organizations in accordance with prescribed norms and regulations to prevent diverse forms of inscriptions from becoming prevalent," he stressed.

On the academy's successful refinement of the Farsi language, he said, "according to our research, less than 20 percent of our terms are foreign, and we have commenced activities for refining the language."

"So far, we have worked on several thousand foreign words existing in Farsi based on their frequency of use, and in recent months we have proposed equivalents for about 100 foreign terms," he pointed out.

There are currently 35 researchers engaged in various research and other projects in the academy, he added.

Iran: President Discusses Measures To Eliminate Poverty

LD1902175196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's instructions to the Plan and Budget Organization to eliminate poverty from the country, Mostafa Mirsalim, the head of Plan and Budget Organization, today met the president and presented a report on the steps taken by this organization so far to prepare a plan for removing poverty from the society. President Hashemi-Rafsanjani thanked the Plan and Budget Organization and once again invited the experts and research workers to cooperate with the Plan and Budget Organization for better implementation of this project in the country.

Iran: Vice President on Political Impact of 'G-6' Group

LD2102104296 Tehran IRNA in English 0720 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA — The formation of G-6 (a group of functionaries of Iran's reconstruction) is a testament to the existence of a free political atmosphere in Iran and contradicts the claims made in this regard by the enemies of the Islamic Republic, declared Vice-President for Executive Affairs Mohammad Hashemi.

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In an interview with the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' printed Wednesday, Hashemi, who is a member of the G-6, said the group enhanced the electoral process and encouraged other factions to nominate their own candidates for the fifth consultative assembly, proving to the world that elections are conducted freely and openly in Iran.

"Considering the large number of parliamentary candidates who represent a wide spectrum of policies and beliefs, the make-up of the fifth Majles will be more representative of the various schools of thought and political philosophies that exist in the country," he underlined.

Elaborating on the G-6, he stated that economic policies pursued by the group are in line with those implemented in the first and second five-year development plans that were approved by the Guardian Council.

Stressing on the importance of cooperation between the legislative and executive branches of government in promoting Iran's economic development, he underscored that the make-up of the fifth parliamentary assembly will be crucial in the successful implementation of the economic policies of the G-6.

The entry of a large number of G-6 candidates into the next Majles would ensure the cooperation of legislative body in executing such policies, said Hashemi, the brother of President Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanjani. The G-6 also includes Vice-President for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani, Vice-President and head of the Atomic Energy Organization Reza Amrollahi, Vice-President and head of the Physical Training Organization Mostafa Hashemi-Taba, Central Bank Governor Mohsen Nurbakhsh and Tehran Mayor Gholamhoseyn Karbaschi.

Iran: Guardian Council Endorses Proposals of Executive Committees

LD2202120796 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Majles elections central supervisory committee of the Guardian Council announced: The proposals of the elections executive committees in Tehran and other provincial constituencies rejecting eligibility of some candidates are endorsed by the Guardian Council.

According to a report of the Central News Unit, the Guardian Council asked the Interior Ministry last night to inform all the candidates whose eligibility has been rejected as soon as possible so they can appeal the decision within the specified legal period. The Guardian Council adds: Those candidates who wish to appeal again against the investigations carried out by the supervisory committees in the provinces can submit a written complaint to the Guardian Council within 24 hours after receiving the results of the investigations.

The report adds: The final decision of the Guardian Council will be announced through governorates and district offices in the month of Esfand [month which began 20 February]. The accepted candidates can begin their campaign a day after the announcement of the final decision. The campaign will continue until a day before the elections, 8 March.

Iran: Liberation Movement of Iran Secretary General Interviewed

NC2202144596 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 15 Feb 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES Service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN—The Iranian nation will not forgive the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), a group which sought refuge in Iran's foe and collaborated with it, while the nation was under sever bombardment of the enemy during the 1980-88 Iraqi imposed war, Secretary General of the Liberation Movement of Iran, Ebrahim Yazdi told the TEHRAN TIMES Wednesday.

Yazdi stressed that during his recent meeting with the visiting UN special representative on the situation of human rights in Iran, Maurice Danby Capithorne, he has told him that the MKO has no social base in Iran.

The foreign minister of the interim government of the late Mehdi Bazargan, the first premier of Iran after the victory of Islamic Revolution, Yazdi has told the UN official that the MKO is an alienated, inanimate group with no popular status.

Yazdi disclosed that the UN special envoy was curious to find out if the MKO had any popular base in the country.

Capithorne is here for a six-day visit to Iran to assess human rights in the country. He has so far visited Majles Speaker, Foreign Minister, and Justice Minister, besides meeting a number of opposition leaders including Yazdi.

Capithorne has said that he is trying to prepare a report based on facts.

Iranian officials have not so far commented on the sincerity of Capithorne, but expressed concern that he may not be totally free to prepare the report on the bases of his own findings.

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Iran: Official Comments on Country's Economic Situation

LD2102221696 Tehran IRNA in English 2148 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA — Secretary of the High Council on Free Trade Zones of Iran, Morteza Elviri said here today that society the wealthiest sector of the Iranian society averaged 27.3 percent more income than the lowest income sectors of the society.

He said a number of proposals had been offered to Iran's President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani with the idea of narrowing the gap between the haves and the have-nots which proposals, he said, were now being evaluated for final adoption.

One such proposals, he said, recommended reduced government subsidies on fuels and energy resources that were being paid for the higher income sectors of the society and the funneling of the savings to the lower income classes.

Elviri said that the administration would do better to discuss such issues with the people and to let them know of bottlenecks and problems candidly, and rest assured that once the people are honestly informed of those problems they would willingly support corrective economic policies rather than listen to hostile slogans by the enemies of the Islamic Republic.

The official said that one problem in tackling national economic issues was that only a small number of economists were consulted rather than economic experts at large as the result of which, he said, economic decision too often hit various obstacles on the way of their implementation.

He also reminded that previous reports and observations on the poverty level in Iran were all too subjective without statistically meaningful interpretations. For example, he said, if the Iranians were to be compared with the Japanese in terms of poverty level then upwards of 80 percent of Iranians would be described to be below poverty level since the per capita income in japan was dlrs 30,000 against only dlrs 1,200 in iran.

Contrarily, he said, if the Iranians were to be compared with the Afghans or with the people in Bangladesh then no one person in Iran would be described to be below poverty level.

Elviri said that poverty level would first have to be defined in Iran in order to decide what percentage of Iran were below that level.

He also commented that Iran's non-oil exports composed only five percent of Iran's national produce which, he said, was far too below in comparison with other countries.

Elviri said that in its previous sessions the Islamic Consultative Assembly had fallen short of adopting wise economic decisions since it had been so much under the influence of non- expert lobbies which, he hoped, would be corrected in the next session of the Majles.

Iran: Editorial Lauds 'Revolution' in Tax System

NC2202150296 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 19 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Revolution in Tax System First Step Towards Eradication of Poverty"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] When our officials talk of eradication of poverty from the society, it is necessary for them to keep in mind that one of the main reasons for the increasing gap between the rich and the poor is loopholes in our tax system.

Why speculators should be able to funnel their money into sectors which allow them to earn overnight bonanzas? Why at all should the rich be able to make overnight bonanza while a considerable section of the society has to bear the brunt of our transforming economy?

Before the present foreign exchange regulations was announced a couple of months ago, the speculators had concentrated their activities on import-export because they could make easy money through this business. With the new foreign exchange regulations, they funnelled their money into housing projects as a result of which the prices surged almost three times in a few months.

The speculators commit these misdeeds with impunity while at the same time they evade taxes because the system has not been able to take them to book.

At the same time, government has a direct, strong leverage in levying taxes on citizens who make their livelihood through fixed salaries and wages. The moment government decides to increase the salaries of government employees, the business class increases the prices of goods and services in advance.

Since government has practically failed to control the prices, the spiraling prices have played a crucial role in increasing the gap between the rich and the poor.

If eradication of poverty is to materialize one day, the first step towards this end will be definition of a meaningful, workable tax system designed to prevent illegal accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few at the cost of social justice.

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Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: President, Opposition Leader Discuss Ethnic Issue

BK2202034696 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 22 Feb 96

[Report by Daya Somasiri — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga yesterday had talks with UNP [United National Party] and Opposition Leader Ranil Wickremesinghe about a political solution to the ethnic problem. It lasted for about an hour.

Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister Prof. G.L. Peiris was associated with the President. Prof. Peiris had separate talks with Mr. Wickremesinghe early this month.

Both sides described yesterday's talks as 'cordial and fruitful'. Mr. Wickremesinghe emerged from Temple Trees [presidential residence] smiling.

Informed sources said the talks revolved around the legal draft of the government's devolution proposals.

It is learnt that Mr. Wickremesinghe had told the President about the work of UNP's National Integration Committee headed by former Media Minister Tyronne Fernando and the discussions it has had with different political parties including the grouping of five Tamil parties.

The UNP leader has also told the President that the National Integration Committee will be meeting today to discuss the outcome of the talks it has had with other political parties.

"The outcome of the discussions of the National Integration Committee will be considered by the UNP Working Committee and placed before the Parliamentary Select Committee which meets on March 7", Mr. Wickremesinghe is quoted as having told the President.

Meanwhile, Prof. Peiris who has started a series of meetings with political parties will also have discussions with the UNP.

UNP's National Integration Committee has told Tamil parties that it will approach the ethnic problem as a national issue and would help the government to resolve it for ever.

Prof. Peiris told the weekly press briefing three weeks ago that the government would treat the ethnic issue as a national problem and would seek the support of all parties, specially that of the UNP, to find a permanent solution. He assured the opposition party that the government would not arrogate for itself any credit for finding a solution.

"The credit will go to the nation as a whole and not to any particular party", Prof. Peiris said.

Sri Lanka: EPDP Reportedly Repulses LTTE Attack in Jaffna

BK2302073296 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 23 Feb 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Eelam Peoples Democratic Party (EPDP) personnel repulsed an attack by Tigers on their office at Delft Island in Jaffna on Wednesday [21 February]. During the confrontation one Tiger was killed and three injured. There were no casualties suffered by the EPDP, an official report said.

At Punnalai Kulam in the Jaffna district troops ambushed a group of LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres and killed two Tigers. Troops also seized three T81 weapons, one T56 weapon, eight T81 magazines, three hand grenades, and 350 7.62 mm rounds.

Sri Lanka: Government Troops Reportedly Halt LTTE Attack in Batticaloa

BK2302071896 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 23 Feb 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TROOPS on Wednesday [21 February] midnight repulsed a 150-strong Tiger attack on an army detachment in Kinniyadi in the Batticaloa district killing 20 Tigers and seriously wounding 32 others.

Reports said that among the Tigers killed was their leader Balendra who led the attack on the Army detachment. Official sources said that although the attack was on Ramazan day, the troops were not taken aback. They countered the two-hour Tiger attack launched with mortars and RPGs. Effective artillery fire neutralised the mortar attack fired by the Tigers simultaneously, the reports said.

LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] transmissions confirmed that 20 Tigers were killed and 32 others seriously injured,reports said.

Our Trincomalee Correspondent K.D. Jayasekera said the troops forced the rest of the LTTE cadres to flee. Three soldiers were also injured and were admitted to the Batticaloa hospital.

"We found the bodies of 10 terrorists and recovered four light machine guns, 12 T-56 assault rifles hand grenades and 11 stretchers," a military officer said.

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Meanwhile, on Tuesday, Feb 20, security forces also repulsed another attack by the LTTE at Periyavilan area, north west of Jaffna, killing four Tigers and wounding eight more. There were no casualties among the troops.

The security forces also seized a cache of arms. Among these were grenades, two T-56 magazines, 1 T-56 weapon, cyanide capsules and medicine.

Security forces also countered a rebel attack on Tuesday at Mavadivembu, west of Batticaloa, killing three Tigers.

Sri Lanka: Over 10 LTTE Cadres Killed in Confrontation With Troops

BK2302113196 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 23 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Over 10 LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] cadres were killed in a confrontation at the Mahanikawewa village in the Kabitigollava police [station] area last evening. It has been reported that terrorists arrived in the village at 1730 to massacre the villagers. However, the Home Guards and the villagers retaliated and killed nearly 10 Tigers. The Home Guards received reinforcements from the police and the army and repulsed the terrorist attack and made the LTTE flee. During the confrontation, two soldiers and a policeman were killed.

Military spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe at a news conference in Colombo this morning said that in this attack six villagers were killed by the Tigers. He said that the terrorists left behind their dead Tigers as well as the arms and ammunition. The brigadier also said that in another incident at Kinniyadi, the terrorists attacked the Kinniyadi army camp and the army repulsed it successfully and the terrorists fled the area. The military spokesman disclosed that two separate investigations were under way in connection with the killings at Kumarapuram. The investigations are conducted according to the civilian rule as well as military law. The military investigators will submit a report to the commander of the army in a couple of days.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Admits EU Decision on Tiger Activities 'A Severe Blow'

BK2102140596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] has admitted that it has [been] delivered a severe blow by the European decision to clamp down on Tiger activities in member countries. Official sources told LANKAPUVATH that, according to intelligence reports, the LTTE's Paris-based international spokesman, (Loras Thillake), has written a letter to the president of the European Union, Jacques Banton [name and title as heard], that described as serious and damaging the comments made by (Fonsin Heneric), the EU's ambassador to New Delhi accredited to Colombo.

The EU's ambassador severely condemned the LTTE's bombing of the Central Bank in which over 80 civilians were killed and over 1,500 wounded. Ambassador (Heneric), who was also in Colombo at the time of the Central Bank bombing, described it as a barbaric act. She said there was evidence to suggest that the LTTE was linked to the mafia, which was engaged in drugs, gunrunning, extortion, prostitution, and all other manners of criminal activity.

Speaking at a news briefing in Colombo, Mrs. (Fonsin Heneric) said that there were also indications of the mafia backing the LTTE. She announced that the EU had issued a special directive to member countries to intensify surveillance of LTTE activities. She said the Tigers had achieved nothing by the bombing, apart from discrediting themselves at their own cost. They have lost the support of the international community, and therefore the LTTE has admitted that it has been delivered a severe blow by the European Union's decision to clamp down on Tiger activities in member countries.

Sri Lanka: Arrested Suspect Discloses Planned LTTE Attacks

BK2102124896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 21 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] suspect R. Dharmalingam, taken into custody from a Narahenpita temple, has revealed some important information. Senior SP, CID [superintendent of police, Criminal Investigation Department], Bandula Wickremasinghe, told our reporter that he disclosed information regarding terrorist attacks planned on highly populated areas in Colombo and the suburbs.

Dharmalingam said that an attack had been planned on one of three state media organizations, the Padukka third satellite station, [and] the Central Telecommunication Building as well. He also revealed that plans had been finalized to attack the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The suspect said that it was his responsibility to collect the necessary information in order to carry out these attacks. The Tiger leader further said that several persons in the LTTE intelligence wing had been deployed for this purpose.

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The senior SP pointed out that all the information revealed by this suspect could not be disclosed for security reasons. The publishing of this information could hamper investigation. The police have also arrested two other suspects who had close connections with Dharmalingam. Persons who gave him shelter when he was the assistant labor commissioner of the Polonnaruwa District have also been taken into custody. Investigations had revealed that certain high officials in the state and private sectors were also associated with Dharmalingam. The SP said that these officials were now being interrogated. Buddhist monks taken in for questioning from the temple have been released.

Sri Lanka: Background of Detained LTTE Suspect Detailed

BK2202033396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 22 Feb 96

[Unattributed report: "Arrested aide's 30 year record in Colombo unravelled — Dharmalingam had meetings with top LTTE intelligence men" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to reports his services had been used by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] throughout his stay over the years in Colombo. Reports also confirm that the LTTE leadership had frequently visited his Velivettiturai home during the latter part of 1995. These close connections had been to obtain certain vital maps and information relating to key institutions and key personnel in the Colombo city. Dharmalingam who had at one time been a planning officer at the Survey Department is said to have had with him vital maps of the Colombo city.

Investigations also revealed that Dharmalingam's wife was the sister of Kumarappa, one of the 13 LTTE leaders who committed suicide after the Navy captured him in the Jaffna waters in August 1987 at the time the IPKF [Indian Peacekeeping Force] was deployed in the north. Kumarappa was at one time the LTTE Jaffna Military Commander.

Dharmalingam prior to joining the Labour Department worked as a teacher at a Kegalle school. Thereafter he worked at the Maradana railway station and the Survey Department. Later he resigned and joined the Labour Department as a Labour Officer before being promoted as Assistant Labour Commissioner in 1990.

Dharmalingam was arrested after a cache of hand grenades and rocket propelled grenades were recently found buried in the premises of a temple at Narahenpita.

"We are now in the process of indexing the documents found in two large suitcases belonging to Dharmalingam, in a room in the temple, which he shared with three other Sinhala boarders", police said.

This includes two diaries, with names, addresses and telephone numbers, they added. "We are at present going through these details, in search of fresh leads", they said.

Police investigations into this cache, as well as the bomber lorry found at Sama Vihare in Kotahena, a couple of days earlier, are aimed at trying to ascertain what the LTTE was next targeting at, and whether these explosives were for a particular operation, or for separate attacks on more than one target.

Government sources point out that his tenure of service in the Survey Department had helped him in acquiring knowledge of the city and north-east.

Another major guerrilla activist the late Umesh Maheswaran, a former PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam] leader had a long spell of service at the Survey Department, and was considered as an expert cartographer, reports said.

Meanwhile, reports said that Kannan, a close associate of Balakumar, the driver of the armaments lorry detected at the Kotahena Sama Viharaya had escaped to Singapore. It is to Kannan that Balakumar had handed over the explosives lorry packed with explosives when it was brought to Colombo, according to reports.

Sri Lanka: Tigers Faulted for Using Buddhist Temples in Activities

BK2202050496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 22 Feb 96

[Editorial: "Abuse of Hospitality" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The discovery of lorries fitted with bombs and modern weaponry close to or in Buddhist temples would have caused some surprise to many. That some of the activities of the terrorists have been conducted under the very nose of the police, as it were, is a matter for even more surprise. That the strategy of these killer Tigers is, of course, to look for places that are least likely to be suspected seems quite obvious now.

The Buddhist temple would have been easy game for the terrorists because the tradition of hospitality which is strong among the Buddhists is even stronger among the Buddhist monks. Anyone stranded may approach the nearest temple and explain his plight and the chief monk of the temple mindful that these could be thieves or robbers would yet offer them the bana maduwa [temple house] as shelter for the night.

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Since the temple is also held as a sanctuary for the persecuted as in medieval Europe, where the monasteries performed that task, the act of taking in strangers is reinforced. Traditions die hard and times have changed. Though Buddhism encourages withdrawal from the things that are Caesar's it has also had to fill the need for religion as a social institution. The temples that were maintained by kings in ancient times or provided with tenants who could maintain and provide services to the temple, are now left to their own resources to run the places of worship. In a poor country what the people can contribute to the maintenance of places of worship is limited. With little patronage coming from the state in contrast to what was before the monks are left to their own devices to run temples. With all their difficulties they have not been neglectful of their obligations to those who come for help irrespective of their religious faiths.

Where there is provision to give out a room they would do so to those who have either to travel great distances or to those troubled with other problems. In exchange for the services provided they leave it to those who have been served to give what they can as a contribution to the maintenance of the place of worship.

In the case of the terrorist who was given accommodation — a room to himself, the contribution made to the temple it was reported, was Rs. [rupees] 250, a sum which would not procure him quite literally a roof for his head anywhere in the city. It is such hospitality and kindness that these criminals have tapped in order to carry out their tasks of death and destruction. The cunning of these men who describe themselves as Tigers display their beastliness in all their actions. What these cowards are doing is to sneak up from behind and strike having made use of the hospitality that has been extended.

The Tigers and their apologists have attempted to tarnish the image of the Buddhist monk as a kind of fundamentalist fanatic. It will be seen that the Buddhist monk who is no longer economically powerful but reduced to a bareness yet performs in most instances his duties and obligations and extends his tolerance and kindness to one and all even though they happen to be strangers.

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